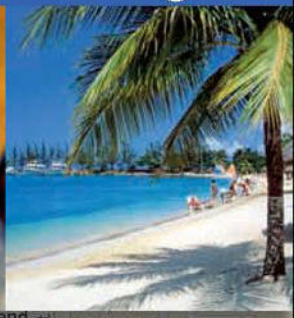
Frommer's™

Jamaica day BY day™

16 Smart Ways to See the Region



VISIT…

Frommer's™

Jamaica day BY day™

1st Edition

by Jo Cooke

WILEY

A John Wiley and Sons, Ltd, Publication

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Telephone (+44) 1243 779777
Email (for orders and customer service enquiries): cs-books@wiley.co.uk.
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UK Publisher: Sally Smith
Executive Project Editor: Daniel Mersey
Commissioning Editor: Mark Henshall
Development Editor: Teresa Fisher
Project Editor: Hannah Clement
Photo Research: Jill Emeny
Cartography: SY Cartography

Wiley also publishes its books in a variety of electronic formats. Some content that appears in print may not be available in electronic books.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-0-470-71709-7

Typeset by Wiley Indianapolis Composition Services

Printed and bound in China by RR Donnelley

5 4 3 2 1

A Note from the Editorial Director

Organizing your time. That's what this guide is all about.

Other guides give you long lists of things to see and do and then expect you to fit the pieces together. The Day by Day guides are different. These guides tell you the best of everything, and then they show you how to see it ***in the smartest, most time-efficient way***. Our authors have designed detailed itineraries organized by time, neighborhood, or special interest. And each tour comes with a bulleted map that takes you from stop to stop.

Would you like to sunbathe on the white sands of Montego Bay, snorkel beneath the cliffs of Negril or stand beneath the gushing cascades at Dunn's River Falls? Hoping to eat fresh-cooked jerk in Ochos Rios, drink a rum punch by the waterfront and dance the night away to reggae? Whatever your interest or schedule, the Day by Days give you the smartest routes to follow. Not only do we take you to the top attractions, hotels, and restaurants, but we also help you access those special moments that locals get to experience—those "finds" that turn tourists into travelers.

The Day by Days are also your top choice if you're looking for one complete guide for all your travel needs. The best hotels and restaurants for every budget, the greatest shopping values, the wildest nightlife—it's all here.

Why should you trust our judgment? Because our authors personally visit each place they write about. They're an independent lot who say what they think and would never include places they wouldn't recommend to their best friends. They're also open to suggestions from readers. If you'd like to contact them, please send your comments our way at feedback@frommers.com, and we'll pass them on.

Enjoy your Day by Day guide—the most helpful travel companion you can buy. And have the trip of a lifetime.

Warm regards,

Kelly Regan, Editorial Director
Frommer's Travel Guides

About the Author

Jo Cooke is a freelance travel writer and photographer with some 12 years' experience writing for consumer magazines and the travel trade. She first went to Jamaica in 1998 to visit friends in Amity, Westmoreland and instantly fell in love with the island. Since then, she has used the slightest excuse to return time and again and is on a mission to give a true depiction of this country which she considers her second home. Widely traveled, Jo has a BA (Hons) in Film from the London College of Printing and is also a published astrologer. For more information about the author and her work, visit www.jocooke.com

Acknowledgments

A huge thank you to the people of Jamaica for their encouragement and enthusiasm for this project. To Terri Doyle and Bob Lockett for their respective guidance on botany and ornithology, and to Mark Henshall for his unerring support and belief in me.

Dedication

To my niece Dorothy Rose Minikin, and to Dezorine Haynes who first introduced me to Jamaica.

An Additional Note

Please be advised that travel information is subject to change at any time—and this is especially true of prices. We therefore suggest that you write or call ahead for confirmation when making your travel plans. The authors, editors, and publisher cannot be held responsible for the experiences of readers while traveling. Your safety is important to us, however, so we encourage you to stay alert and be aware of your surroundings.

Star Ratings, Icons & Abbreviations

Every hotel, restaurant, and attraction listing in this guide has been ranked for quality, value, service, amenities, and special features using a **star-rating system.** Hotels, restaurants, attractions, shopping, and nightlife are rated on a scale of zero stars (recommended) to three stars (exceptional). In addition to the star-rating system, we also use a kids icon to point out the best bets for families. Within each tour, we recommend cafes, bars, or restaurants where you can take a break. Each of these stops appears in a shaded box marked with a coffee-cup-shaped bullet .

The following **abbreviations** are used for credit cards:

AE	American Express	DISC	Discover	V	Visa
DC	Diners Club	MC	MasterCard		

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A Note on Prices

In the "Take a Break" and "Best Bets" sections of this book, we have used a system of dollar signs to show a range of costs for 1 night in a hotel (the price of a double-occupancy room) or the cost of an entree (main course) at a restaurant. Use the following table to decipher the dollar signs:

Cost	Hotels	Restaurants
$	under $100	under $10
$$	$100–$200	$10–$20
$$$	$200–$300	$20–$30
$$$$	$300–$400	$30–$40
$$$$$	over $400	over $40

How to Contact Us

In researching this book, we discovered many wonderful places—hotels, restaurants, shops, and more. We're sure you'll find others. Please tell us about them, so we can share the information with your fellow travelers in upcoming editions. If you were disappointed with a recommendation, we'd love to know that, too. Please write to:

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20 Favorite **Moments**

20 Favorite **Moments**

Previous page: Negril sunset.

Rum, reggae, and beaches of white sand may be the abiding images associated with this tropical isle, but that is just the start of the story. Jamaica's tumbling waterfalls; the peace to be found journeying along its rolling rivers; and the views to be savored from its rainforest peaks are just a few of the delights that await visitors beyond the coast. Here are 20 of my own favorite experiences.

1 **Enjoying a 'Reggaesage' at the Oasis Spa in Negril.** The therapist works her way up and down your back as if it's a percussion instrument in this unique massage experience. Bob Marley classics played by a steel band are piped into the treatment room as you are pummeled and caressed in time to the beat. It's both invigorating and sensual, the perfect start to a holiday, easing you into the easy pace and colorful vitality of Jamaican life (see p 32).

2 **Drinking rum punch in the lounge bar at Canoe, on the waterfront in Negril.** Kick off your flip flops, put your feet up and spend the afternoon slumped on the plump sofas here sipping rum punch. Each bar has its own secret recipe for this fruity cocktail. Canoe's concoction is particularly delicious, potent, and addictive. After two you won't have a care in the world—or be able to feel your legs (see p 143).

3 **Eating freshly-cooked jerk at Scotchies Too in Ocho Rios.** I'll drive a long way to get my jerk fix at this rustic garden eatery. Admire the rows of chicken slowly roasting over the pimento-wood barbecue pits and watch as your chosen cut is chopped into shape. Heap on lots of hot sauce to set your stomach on fire, then cool yourself down again with an ice-cold Red Stripe beer or some coconut water—all for under $5 (see p 134).

4 **Watching the sun set and the moon rise from the roof terrace at Lime Tree Farm in the Blue Mountains.** Remote and peaceful, this accommodation offers a chance

Panoramic views from the roof terrace at Lime Tree Farm in the Blue Mountains.

Noel Coward statue at Firefly.

to immerse yourself in Jamaica's outback with its panoramic views of the great outdoors. As day fades to night the peaks become silhouettes, the sky looks like a black velvet tarpaulin speckled with diamante, and the moon feels so close you could reach out and touch it (see p 148).

5 **Sitting on the window ledge at Firefly.** Said to be the very spot where British wit and playwright Noel Coward contemplated and drew inspiration for his writing. Look out across the lawn to the outline of the pool where the jet-set once played, and then write your postcards in the hope that some of his talent rubs off on you. The view of the north-eastern coastline is incredible from here, too (see p 97).

6 **Posing for a photo at YS Falls.** Jamaica takes its name from the native word **Xaymaca,** which means land of wood and water. Few vistas can sum up this description better than the cascades on the YS estate in the south of the island. Stand on one of the platforms in front of the ice-white curtains of water that beat the rocks below. You'll be framed by a wooded wonderland of intertwined ferns and ginger lilies (see p 114).

7 **Bathing in the Blue Hole.** This secret garden is very much off the beaten track. It has a natural pool at its center, fed by an underground spring. Bluer than the sky and cool enough to make you tingle, it is the perfect place to escape the crowds on a sultry summer day (see p 78).

8 **Snorkeling beneath the cliffs of Negril's West End.** Slip into the ocean and you will immediately have a window to an underwater world. Fish dart around the undulating seabed, among the sponges, and in and out of the caves that pock the shoreline (see p 83).

9 **Body-surfing the rollers at Calabash Bay.** In contrast to the calm waters of the north coast's beaches, those in the south have some wave action. Swim out to beyond where the waves break, then let them carry you back into the sandy shore (see p 63).

10 **Feeling the gentle touch of a hummingbird at Rocklands Bird Feeding Station.** In the late afternoon this woodland garden hidden in the hills above Montego Bay is besieged by dozens of these enchanting birds. Hold out a bottle of sugar water and place the fingers

Rocklands Bird Feeding Station.

Sunbathe on Doctor's Cave Beach, Montego Bay.

of your other hand beneath it. If you remain steady, hummingbirds take turns to rest on your fingertips as they sip the syrup. You'll hear the flutter of their wings and feel their vibration as they drink (see p 71).

11 River rafting the Rio Grande, Port Antonio. The bamboo rafts that ply this river used to carry fruit and bananas to waiting ships, until Errol Flynn popularized the journey as a day trip. Climb aboard the narrow 9m- (30 ft-)long craft that have a seat made for two, and enjoy a relaxing and romantic 12.8km (8-mile) ride downstream. Stop at riverside craft stalls, at Belinda's Canteen for lunch, take a swim, or just sit back and watch rural life unfold on the river banks (see p 24).

12 Driving the coast road between Boston Beach and White Horses. This section of the A4 east of Port Antonio offers a feast for the eyes and a snapshot of authentic Jamaican life. It carries you past rugged, rocky beaches bashed by breaking rollers; through fishing villages; rural hamlets; cane fields; and farmland. What's more, it's on a road in a generally good state of repair (see p 61).

13 Playing at being James Bond or Honey Ryder at Dunn's River Falls. Stand beneath the gushing cascades of Jamaica's largest waterfall and you will be following in the footsteps of Sean Connery and Ursula Andress. The love scene from *Dr No*, the first film about Ian Fleming's fictional spy, was shot with this beauty spot as a backdrop (see p 100).

14 Sunbathing on Doctor's Cave Beach, Montego Bay. This stretch of white sand met by turquoise blue sea looks as though it must have been air-brushed, it is so picture-perfect. The saturated colors of nature are complemented by the red, blue, and yellow parasols that dot the beach (see p 92).

15 Visiting Cinchona Garden, Blue Mountains. Escape to this mountain-top botanical garden 1,524m (5,000 ft) above sea level, and you will feel as if you've discovered a forgotten paradise. Tropical flowers and exotic trees planted by the Victorians thrive just below the clouds. It may be a little unkempt with the bush encroaching fast upon its bedding plants, but it's the best picnic spot in Jamaica (see p 73).

River rafting the Rio Grande, Port Antonio.

Cinchona Garden in the Blue Mountains.

16 Piecing together Falmouth's social history. Spend an hour in the fascinating graveyards of St Peter's Anglican Church and the William Knibb Memorial Church. Read the headstones to discover who lived here during the 18th century when, thanks to the thriving sugar trade, Falmouth was a boom town (see p 47).

17 Dancing to live reggae music in Negril. Jamaica is the birthplace of reggae, and the island is awash with talented musicians. Dance to the touring bands that play in the hotels come sundown, or seek out the local nightspots where the stars of tomorrow play live on stage (see p 118).

18 Watching the sun rise from the Blue Mountain Peak. It may take three hours of uphill climbing in the dark to reach the summit but when the clouds clear at dawn you'll have a panoramic view of the island and possibly the outline of Cuba beyond. Hiking to the top of Jamaica's 2,256m (7,402 ft) peak is the island's ultimate high (see p 110).

19 Sipping the island's finest rum on the Appleton Estate tour. Although I may be a little biased, Appleton's golden rum is the smoothest and arguably the best in the world. Try it for yourself on the tour of the estate where it is created and blended. Surrounded by sugar cane fields in the heart of the picturesque south-coast countryside, the journey to the estate is a pleasure in itself (see p 115).

20 Checking out the wares at Falmouth's Bend Down Market. Stick your elbows out and get stuck in to this hectic, colorful local experience. Stalls selling all manner of odds and ends, fruit, vegetables, and tableware are set up on the sidewalk at this sprawling market held weekly every Wednesday (see p 35). ●

Colorful local produce on a market stall.

1 **Strategies** for Seeing Jamaica

Strategies for Seeing Jamaica

Previous page: Glass-bottomed tour boot on calm waters.

Jamaica is an island nation bursting with culture, charisma, natural wonders, man-made attractions, and fabulous beaches. The more you see the more you will want to see. Exploring this Caribbean destination is enormously rewarding, but it can be a little challenging if you don't plan ahead. Here are some strategies to help you enrich your time and travels.

Rule #1: The Pros & Cons of Car Hire

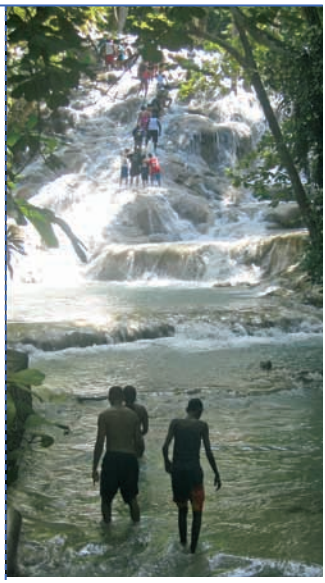
Jamaica's beach resorts are spectacular and undeniably the biggest draw, but don't miss out on all the other attractions the country has to offer. The best are scattered island-wide. Hiring your own car gives you the ultimate freedom to create your own itinerary. As an added bonus, you'll often have the attractions all to yourself for a while outside the weekends, when the locals tend to visit. However, many roads are in varying states of repair. They can also be narrow. Despite this Jamaican drivers are confident enough not to ease off the gas too often. Experienced drivers should be able to adjust quickly to the Jamaican style of driving, though, and hiring a 4x4 makes life easier still. And remember, in Jamaica they drive on the left—except when avoiding pot holes.

Rule #2: The Pros & Cons of Organized Tours

The simplest way to see the sights is by booking an organized tour. There are some excellent tour companies in Jamaica with a host of guided trips on offer. The tour price often includes entrance fees and lunch, too. However, the itineraries generally cover only the most popular attractions and the time you spend at each is often less than you need to fully appreciate it.

Rule #3: Consider Hiring a Driver

If you prefer not to drive yourself, but still want to see some of the less-accessible sights, I would recommend hiring a licensed driver with a licensed car. It can even work out cheaper than booking an organized tour if there are more than two of you willing to pick up the tab. This can usually be arranged through your hotel and at the time of going to press you can expect to pay from US$150 a day, dependent on the distance you want to travel.



Time your visit to popular attractions such as Dunn's River Falls wisely to avoid the worst of the crowds.

Rule #4: Safety First

While the vast majority of tourists have a hassle-free holiday in Jamaica, it is still best to err on the

A Rasta flag.

side of caution. If you are traveling cross country independently, always book your hotel in advance of arrival; carry a mobile phone with you so you can phone ahead for directions or assistance, and try to reach your chosen accommodation before nightfall.

Rule #5: Time Your Visits to Avoid the Crowds

Around half of Jamaica's visitors arrive by cruise ship. As soon as the passengers disembark en masse in Montego Bay or Ocho Rios, the best-known and closest attractions to port—such as Dunn's River Falls and Rose Hall Great House—swell with tourists. Either arrive as the attraction opens or shortly before it closes—beating the cruise ship passengers to it or arriving in their wake. Better still, if your schedule allows, visit on another day. Your concierge will be able to tell you what days and times these floating hotels are expected.

Rule #6: Play By the Rules

Enjoy the laid-back island vibe of rum and reggae, but beware the reefer. However easy it may be to obtain marijuana in Jamaica, it is illegal to use, possess, or export it. Stereotypical images may suggest smoking ganja is an accepted part of island life, but it is frowned upon by Jamaica's predominantly Christian population. Prosecutions and even jail sentences are not uncommon for tourists and Jamaicans alike.

Rule #7: Dealing with Hawkers & Vendors

With all the fabulous resorts and luxury hotels that Jamaica offers, it's easy to forget that you are in a third- world country. It's a tough place to earn a living and unemployment is high. During your stay you'll undoubtedly be offered everything from hair braiding and cold drinks to T-shirts and comical, knitted Rasta hats—complete with fake dreadlocks—by Jamaicans trying to make some extra cash from affluent tourists. Some are an undeniable nuisance, but the vast majority are just trying to support themselves and their families. Show you respect this by looking politely, if briefly, at their wares and then saying no thank you firmly if nothing catches your eye. From experience, this approach strikes the right balance—you can walk away neither feeling pressurized nor that you have offended. ●

2 The Best Full-Day Tours

Jamaica in a **Long Weekend**

Previous page: YS falls.

In a long weekend you can get a brief taste of all that Jamaica has to offer. Stay on the north coast, basing yourself in Montego Bay as this is the closest resort to the airport. By splitting your weekend between here and the neighboring resort of Ocho Rios, you can get a glimpse of the island's colonial past, its waterfalls, and rainforest as well as getting some time on the beach.

Travel Tip

For hotels and restaurants in these towns see Chapter 6: Montego Bay p 127; Ocho Rios p 133. For detailed information on sights, see Chapter 5: Montego Bay p 90; Ocho Rios p 96.

Day One

1 Montego Bay. Start your morning by taking a dip at **Doctor's Cave Beach** (see p 92), a bathing club on Mo' Bay's best beach—a gleaming stretch of white sand lapped by bright-blue ocean. From here, you can hire some snorkel gear and view the schools of tropical fish offshore or take a glass-bottomed boat ride through the waters of **Montego Bay Marine Park** (see p 92). End your morning by browsing the shops along **Gloucester Avenue** known as the **Hip Strip**.

Perhaps follow this with a late Jamaican breakfast or early lunch at **The Pelican Grill** also on the Hip Strip (see p 128).

As the midday sun starts to intensify, leave the town center, heading east for 15km (9.5 miles) on the North Coast Highway to Rose Hall Great House.

2 Rose Hall Great House. Turn right just after the Rose Hall Resort and Spa and follow the driveway up to the house. This is the most famous Great House in Jamaica and the spookiest. The beautifully-restored 18th-century interior is full of antiques. It gives a true sense of the time when its mistress Annie Palmer, known as the White Witch of Rose Hall, presided over the estate. Tour guides in period costume recount this fascinating tale as they lead you through the house and gardens (see p 93).

Rose Hall Great House and Gardens.

Rejoin the North Coast Highway heading west 29km (18 miles). Go left at the Reading turn-off. Head towards Anchovy, and turn at the sign for Rocklands Bird Feeding Station.

3 **Rocklands Bird Feeding Station.** The early afternoon is the best time to see the hummingbirds that feed daily in these pretty flower gardens. Some are confident enough to drink from the sugar-water feeder bottles that visitors are invited to hold (see p 91).

Retrace your route to Montego Bay, turning left at the signs for Freeport as you near the center. Follow Southern Cross Boulevard to The Houseboat Grill.

4 ★ **The Houseboat Grill.** End your first day enjoying a sundowner on the upper-deck bar of this characterful houseboat (see p 128) on Bogue Lagoon. Choose a live lobster from their pool for dinner, split grilled and cooked with white wine, brandy, or garlic.

Day Two

Set off early on the North Coast Highway, heading east from Montego Bay. This excellent tarmac road traces the path of the coastline and most of your 108km (67 miles) drive to the resort of Ocho Rios will be accompanied by stunning sea views.

5 **Ocho Rios.** This busy cruise-ship port is a bustling hub of activity and home to the country's most visited attractions (see p 96).

As you come into town turn right at the huge sign for Dunn's River Falls.

6 **Dunn's River Falls.** Embraced by a rainforest landscape, these falls are Jamaica's most visited attraction. Climb or simply gaze at the haze of misty water that pummels the rock and boulders as it falls 183m (600 ft) to the sea. Make the most of your visit by lazing or swimming at the long, sandy beach at the base of the falls. Squeeze in some shopping time, too. The craft market near the top of the falls is perhaps the most interesting and easy-going place to haggle for a souvenir on the island. You could also grab a bite to eat at the ethnic food stalls (see p 100).

Leave the falls and drive back to the North Coast Highway, crossing the road to Dolphin Cove.

7 **Dolphin Cove.** Marine shows and swim-with-dolphin programs can be booked in advance at this ever-popular attraction on the water's edge (see p 101).

Take the North Coast Highway towards Ocho Rios, continuing for 3km (2 miles) until you reach Prospect Plantation.

8 **Prospect Plantation.** Finish your day with a tour of **Prospect Plantation** (see p 98) where you will get a chance to see how the exotic

Display of exotic fruit produced at Prospect Plantation.

Martha Brae Rafters Village.

fruit and vegetables typical of the island are cultivated. Head back to Montego Bay early evening to sample the nightlife. You should be in time for happy hour at **Pier 1** (see p 129), a friendly waterfront bar with live music, talent shows, performers, and DJs.

Once again join the North Coast Highway in Montego Bay and head east for 37km (23 miles) until you reach Falmouth (see p 95).

Day Three

9 Falmouth. Take a walk around the streets and harbor of this one-time sugar port and you'll feel like you've stepped back in time. The architecture here dates from the 18th century and the town has one of the largest concentrations of Georgian buildings in the Caribbean. When you're ready for lunch try the fish at **Papa Gus** (see p 94).

After lunch, follow signs inland for 5km (3 miles) for Martha Brae River Rafting.

10 Martha Brae Rafters Village. For a relaxing afternoon, climb aboard a bamboo raft and be steered gently downriver by a raft captain who will give the names of the flora and fauna you pass along the way (see p 55).

Rejoin the North Coast Highway and head east for 14km (9 miles). Turn right at the sign for the Outameni Experience opposite the Breezes Trelawny Resort.

11 Outameni Experience. Try to make time to join the hour-long cultural tour here. The interactive stage shows and dance performances make learning a joy. By its end you'll be well-versed in centuries of Jamaican history (see p 95).

Take the North Coast Highway west for 11km (7 miles) and turn off at Rock, 3.2km (2 miles) east of Falmouth, following signs to Luminous Lagoon.

12 Luminous Lagoon. Just after sunset take a boat ride across this magical inlet (see p 55). The water sparkles with shards of green and blue light when the boat's wake disturbs the rare micro-organisms that thrive within.

It's just a short drive west back to Montego Bay on the North Coast Highway.

13 Margaritaville. If you have the energy, join the jocular crowd to dance the night away pool-side after sampling their tasty menu and enticing cocktail list (see p 128).

Take time out for lunch at Papa Gus.

Day 1

1. Long Bay
2. Negril Craft Market
3. Negril Lighthouse
4. Rick's Café

Day 2

5. Royal Palm Reserve
6. Rhodes Hall Plantation
7. Bloody Bay
8. On the Rocks Restaurant & Bar

Day 3

9. Rose Hall Great House
10. Scotchies Too
11. Dunn's River Falls
12. Toscanini's

Day 4

13. Dolphin Cove
14. Main Street
15. Mystic Mountain
16. Dinner Terrace at Jamaica Inn

Day 5

17. Green Castle Estate
18. Jack's Bay
19. Castleton Garden
20. Island Village
21. Margaritaville

Day 6

22. Outameni Experience
23. Falmouth
24. Half Moon Shopping Village
25. Doctor's Cave Beach
26. Montego Bay Yacht Club

Day 7

27. Martha Brae Rafters Village
28. Rocklands Bird Feeding Station
29. Luminous Lagoon

With a full seven days, you can spend a little time in each of the 'Big Three' (as Jamaica's north coast resorts Negril, Montego Bay, and Ocho Rios are collectively known) as well as exploring some off-the-beaten-track attractions on the north-east coast. Taking ten days to cover the route would give you more time to savor the beaches and linger at the attractions.

Travel Tip

For hotels and restaurants in these towns see Chapter 6: Montego Bay p 127; Ocho Rios p 133; Negril p 143. For detailed information on sights see Chapter 5: Montego Bay p 90; Ocho Rios p 96; Negril p 118.

Day One

Start your tour in the quietest, most laid-back of the Big Three resorts—Negril.

1 Long Bay. Spend a couple of hours unwinding on **Long Bay beach** (see p 60). Watch the world go by, sip cocktails served at your sun lounger, and take a few cooling swims. On this 11km (7 mile) stretch of sand you are never far away from a bar or restaurant. One of my lunch favorites is **Legends Beach Restaurant** (at Legends Hotel, see p 144).

Walk to the western end of the beach or drive along Norman Manley Boulevard. Negril Craft Market is by the bridge near the town center.

2 Negril Craft Market. Chat to the friendly stallholders and browse the eclectic mix of stalls selling crafts, T-shirts, and bric-a-brac at the **Negril Craft Market** (see p 36). While you're there, take some photos of the colorful fishing boats moored at the mouth of the river next to the market.

Norman Manley Boulevard continues from the market to a roundabout. Turn right here and follow the coast road up to the resort's cliff-top West End. Follow the snaking, narrow road for 4.5km (3 miles) to Negril Lighthouse.

3 Negril Lighthouse, West End. Open to visitors, this lighthouse affords sweeping views of the headland, if you don't mind climbing the stairs to its turret (see p 121).

Continue 1.5km (1 mile) farther east.

4 Rick's Café. Arriving early afternoon at the resort's most patronized bar ensures you'll be able to bag one of the best tables to watch the sunset from. Watch the dare-devil professional cliff-divers here, or take a dip yourself from one of the rocky platforms or the rock-hewn stairway. The snorkeling is excellent too. After sunset, listen to the band then head to a cliff-top restaurant for dinner. Enjoy the warm hospitality at Xtabi (see p 145), or the jovial atmosphere of Push Cart (see p 144).

Negril lighthouse.

On the Rocks, over-looking Bloody Bay.

Day Two

Head west on Norman Manley Boulevard, turning left at the roundabout towards Sheffield. After 4km (2.5 miles), turn left at the sign for Royal Palm Reserve.

5 Royal Palm Reserve. Start your day with a nature kick. Here, Negril's beaches give way to an extensive swampland called the Great Morass. It's an exciting patchwork of sawgrass, freshwater, and forest, part of which you can explore via a trail of boardwalks (see p 121).

Return to Negril, turn right at the roundabout following Norman Manley Boulevard to Orange Bay and Rhodes Hall Plantation.

6 Rhodes Hall Plantation. Spend an hour on the Mangrove and Crocodile Tour at this working plantation. The brackish water of the lake here is home to these scaly reptiles. If you dare, stand on the floating boardwalk to take a closer look at the crocodiles as the tour guide feeds them (see p 119).

Head west on Norman Manley Boulevard for 8km (5 miles) to Bloody Bay.

7 Bloody Bay. While away a lazy afternoon on the sheltered semi-circular sands of **Bloody Bay** beach (see p 119). Or try out one of the watersports activities on offer including jet-skiing, kayaking, and parasailing.

Continue on Norman Manley Boulevard westwards to the roundabout, then turn right on West End Road.

8 ★ On the Rocks Restaurant & Bar. Opt for a casual dining experience here, overlooking Bloody Bay (see p 144), then end your day by taking in a live reggae stage show on Long Bay Beach, at ★ Bourbon Beach or ★★ Alfred's Ocean Palace, two of the best music spots in town.

Follow the trail of broadwalks through the Royal Palm Reserve.

Spend an afternoon cooling off at Dunn's River Falls.

Day Three

Make an early start for the long but easy 188km (117 miles) drive to Ocho Rios. Just 15km (9.5 miles) east of Montego Bay, turn right at the sign for Rose Hall Great House.

9 ★★ Rose Hall Great House. Take the tour of this quirky colonial plantation house built in the 1700s. It once presided over 6,000 acres of sugar cane fields and is said to be haunted (see p 93).

A further 85km (53 miles) on the North Coast Highway brings you to the Drax Hall road junction, just before you reach the busy resort center of Ocho Rios.

10 Scotchies Too, on the right-hand side of the junction, is a great place to stop for lunch. Order some jerk chicken and festival (a spicy donut), and eat it in the shady garden (see p 134).

Continue for a further 5km (3 miles) east on the North Coast Highway.

11 Dunn's River Falls. These are the island's most majestic cascades, and a perfect place to spend a balmy afternoon. Cool off with a swim at the beach below the falls before making the climb to the top late afternoon, when this natural wonder isn't too crowded (see p 100).

Turn right out of Dunn's River Falls and take the North Coast Highway east for 8km (5 miles) to Toscanini's.

12 Toscanini's. Finish your day by treating yourself to dinner on the garden patio of this Italian fine-dining restaurant (see p 135).

Day Four

13 kids Dolphin Cove. Spend a half-day getting to know these friendly sea creatures at this beach-side marine life center (see p 101). ***North Coast Highway 4km (2.5 miles) west of Ocho Rios town center.***

14 Main Street. Head into Ocho Rios's town center for lunch. **Margaritaville** (see p 134) has an attractive beachfront setting or you could try **Bibibips** (see p 133) which has views of the coast. Afterwards browse or buy gifts at the duty-free shops and markets

The colonial plantation house Rose Hall, built in the 1700s, is rumored to be haunted.

that line bustling Main Street (see p 133).

Drive 2km (1.5 miles) west of Ocho Rios on the North Coast Highway to Mystic Mountain, which is located just before Dunn's River Falls.

15 **Mystic Mountain.** Finish your sightseeing for today by taking the cable-car ride to the viewing platform at Mystic Mountain for the most impressive views in town. Stay to watch the setting sun then, if it is a Friday or Saturday night, take an illuminated zip wire and glide through the attraction's rainforest glade (see p 100).Whizzing through the trees in semi-darkness is both exhilarating and a little eerie.

Take the North Coast Highway east for 3km (2 miles) to Jamaica Inn.

16 Make a reservation at the ★★ **Dinner Terrace at Jamaica Inn**, if you feel like pushing the boat out for supper (see p 134).

Day Five

Drive east along the North Coast Highway towards Port Antonio for 55km (34 miles). Turn left at Robin's Bay Road, by the colorful bus stop marked 'Strawberry Fields'. Follow signs to Green Castle Estate.

17 **Green Castle Estate.** Spend today a little off the beaten track and join the fascinating eco tour of this working coconut plantation. You'll get to see how organic coconut oil is made and visit the vast shade houses of orchids that are grown here (see p 70).

Drive back to Robin's Bay Road and turn left towards the coast. After 5km (3 miles) you will get to Jack's Bay beach.

18 **Jack's Bay.** This private cove is frequented largely by Jamaican families. It's pretty, but not preened. Bathe in the shallow waters met by dark yellow sand, and feast on freshly-caught fish at the funky, rustic beach-shack restaurant.

En route back to Ocho Rios, make a detour to Castleton Garden by turning left off the North Coast Highway just after Annotto Bay. Take the A3 for 19.5km (12 miles) to its entrance.

19 **Castleton Garden.** Established in 1897, Castleton is a spectacular and unruly jungle of ferns and flowers, together with 25 species of palm trees (see p 73), and an ideal spot for a picnic.

Retrace your steps to the North Coast Highway and return to Ocho Rios.

20 **Island Village.** Take a tour of Jamaica's musical heritage at **Reggae Explosion** in this upmarket shopping center (see p 99).

21 ★ **Margaritaville.** Just steps away from Reggae Explosion, have dinner here right by the water's edge, then stay on to party with the night-time crowds. Things usually heat up around 10pm on the dance floor (see p 129).

Orchids in shade houses at the Green Castle Estate.

Day Six

Head west on the North Coast Highway towards Montego Bay for 67km (42 miles), then turn left into the Outameni Experience opposite Breezes Trelawny Resort.

22 **Outameni Experience.** This entertaining multi-media museum tour shoe-horns Jamaican history into an action-packed hour as dancers, actors, and singers in period dress tell the tales of the centuries (see p 95).

Rejoin the highway heading west for 3km (2 miles) until you reach Falmouth.

23 **Falmouth.** In the heyday of the plantocracy era, this well-preserved Georgian town was Jamaica's most successful port, exporting sugar and other goods produced on estates like Rose Hall (see p 93).

Continue 19km (12 miles) westwards out of Falmouth.

24 **Half Moon Shopping Village.** Take a break for some mall shopping at the **Half Moon Shopping Village** (see p 126), followed by lunch at the **Royal Stocks English Pub and Steakhouse** (see p 129), also at the mall.

Head back to Montego Bay.

25 **Doctor's Cave Beach.** The best beach in Montego Bay is *the* place to relax and play after a long drive (see p 92).

Take the North Coast Highway west from Gloucester Avenue and follow signs to Freeport.

26 **Montego Bay Yacht Club.** Enjoy a sundowner by the bobbing boats at the yacht club (see p 91). It's just a stone's throw from the **Houseboat Grill** (see p 128), one of the smartest places in the resort to have dinner. If you still yearn for nightlife, the hip, friendly waterfront bar **Pier One** is close by with DJs or live entertainment (see p 129).

Hummingbird at Rocklands Bird Feeding Station.

Day Seven

Retrace your steps to Falmouth, then follow signs inland for 5km (3 miles) to Martha Brae River Rafting.

27 **Martha Brae Rafters Village.** On your last morning, take a slow and easy trip down the river (see p 55).

28 **Rocklands Bird Feeding Station.** In the afternoon, get a closer look at the island's hummingbirds—the only species in the world that can fly backwards (see p 91).

29 **Luminous Lagoon.** As dusk settles, make your way to this wondrous lagoon for a magical boat trip (see p 55), followed by dinner on the terrace at **The Native** restaurant (see p 128), an intimate spot with views of the **Hip Strip,** whose bars and clubs buzz with life after dark.

Day 1

1. Ocho Rios

Day 2

2. Dunn's River Falls
3. Fern Gully
4. Wassi Art Gallery
5. Prospect Plantation
6. Toscanini's

Day 3

7. Port Antonio
8. Rio Grande River Rafting
9. Woody's
10. Blue Lagoon
11. Frenchman's Cove
12. Errol Flynn Marina
13. Mille Fleurs

Day 4

14. Reach Falls
15. Dawn's Bar & Snack Stop
16. Port Royal
17. Emancipation Park

Day 5

18. Craighton Estate
19. Holywell Recreational Park

Day 6

20. Cinchona Gardens
21. Bob Marley Museum
22. Devon House

Day 7

23. Hope Botanic Gardens
24. Juici Patties
25. Mandeville
26. Treasure Beach

Day 8

27. Bamboo Avenue
28. YS Falls
29. Appleton Rum Estate

Day 9

30. Calabash Bay
31. Lover's Leap
32. Alligator Hole Nature Park
33. Little Ochi

Day 10

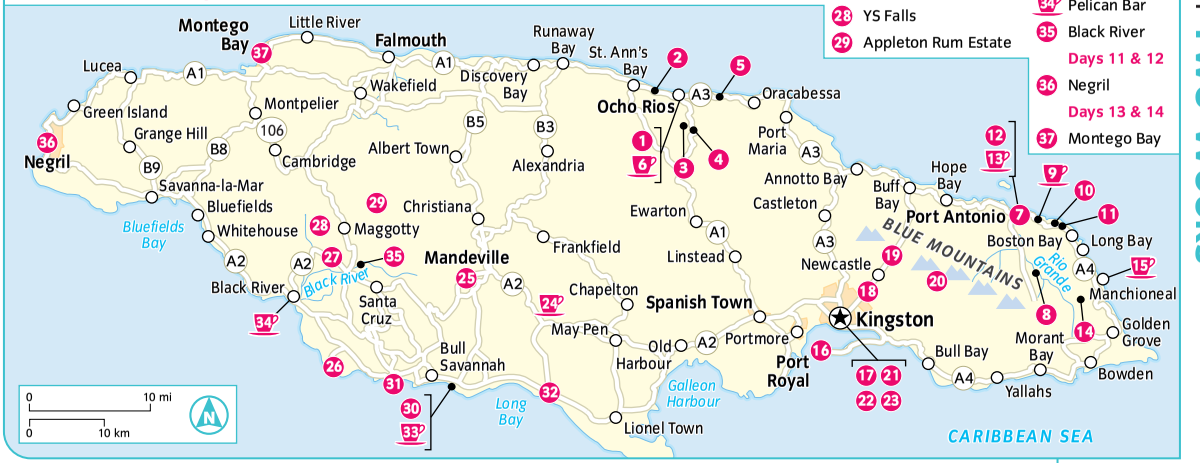
34. Pelican Bar
35. Black River

Days 11 & 12

36. Negril

Days 13 & 14

37. Montego Bay



With two weeks at your disposal you can combine city and rural highlights; visit some of the best beaches and the less touristy resorts; and see the top attractions. This tour draws on elements of the Long Weekend and Week-long tours (see p 12 and p 16) and gives a good overview of the different terrains and experiences Jamaica has to offer.

Travel Tip

For hotels and restaurants in these towns see Chapter 6: Montego Bay p 125; Ocho Rios p 131; Port Antonio p 137; Negril p 141; Kingston and the Blue Mountains p 147; Treasure Beach p 153. For detailed information on sights in these towns see Chapter 5: Montego Bay p 90; Ocho Rios p 96; Port Antonio p 102; Negril p 118; Kingston and the Blue Mountains p 106; Treasure Beach p 112.

Day One

1 **Ocho Rios.** There are so many things to see and do in and around this bustling resort that you ideally need two full days here. On your first day, follow Day Four of Jamaica in One Week (see p 19).

Day Two

From Ocho Rios town center head west on the North Coast Highway for 1.6km (1 mile).

2 **Dunn's River Falls.** Follow 5 of Day Two of a Long Weekend in Jamaica for a perfect morning at the island's most spectacular waterfalls (see p 14).

Head back towards Ocho Rios, then turn right on to the A3 towards Walkerswood through Fern Gully.

3 **Fern Gully.** A thick rainforest of lush ferns and trees crowds the road along this 5km (3 mile) ravine. Driving through it is like journeying through a tunnel of pale green light (see p 99).

Drive back towards town. Turn right at the sign for Wassi Art Gallery.

4 **Wassi Art Gallery.** Take the tour of this potters' workshop where local artists produce a diverse range of ceramics (see p 99).

Rejoin the North Coast Highway heading east for approximately 5km (3 miles) to Prospect Plantation.

5 **Prospect Plantation.** This working estate offers tractor-pulled carriage rides through the crop fields of pimento, bananas, and cacao. Visit the butterfly aviary and 18th-century Great House too.

6 ★★ **Toscanini's.** Finish your day with an alfresco dinner at this Italian restaurant set in the grounds of a restored mid-19th-century manse (see p 135).

A tree planted by Winston Churchill at the Prospect Plantation.

Errol Flynn Marina.

Day Three

Head east on the North Coast Highway to Port Antonio.

7 **Port Antonio.** Errol Flynn's favorite Jamaican resort is known for its greenery and deep blue seas.

Turn right as you reach the center of town and follow signs for Berridale.

8 **Rio Grande River Rafting.** This is the best and longest river-rafting trip in Jamaica. Starting at Berridale, the winding journey downstream carries you through 13km (8 miles) of breathtaking scenery of hills, farmland, and limestone cliffs. The trip ends at Rafter's Rest at the ocean next to the North Coast Highway, 9.5 km (6 miles) west of Port Antonio. You can arrange for one of the raft captains to drive your car here from Berridale.

Drive back into Port Antonio on the North Coast Highway, pass through town and you'll then reach the village of Drapers 13km (8 miles).

9 **Woody's.** This cheerful cafe-cum-restaurant, with walls decorated with quirky sayings and clever morals, is an ideal lunch stop with its mouth-watering homemade burgers. (See p 139.)

Continue east and turn left at the sign for the Blue Lagoon.

10 **Blue Lagoon.** Take a moment to look at this basin of glimmering blue water cloaked in rainforest. Spring-fed, it is a little cold to swim in.

Rejoin the highway heading east then turn off at Frenchman's Cove.

11 **Frenchman's Cove.** This is the most picturesque place to swim or snorkel in Port Antonio (see p 62). An arc of soft sand bordered by verdant cliffs meets a deep blue ocean.

Head west back into Port Antonio.

12 **Errol Flynn Marina.** Spend the rest of the afternoon browsing the specialty stores in this elegant waterfront complex (see p 139).

13 ★ **Mille Fleurs.** Reserve a table at this restaurant on the hillside above Port Antonio where you can watch the sunset over the harbor as you dine (see p 138).

Day Four

Take to the North Coast Highway, which now becomes known as the A4, heading east until you reach Manchioneal after 24km (15 miles). After less than an hour,

look for the sign for Reach Falls and follow a country road to the entrance.

14 Reach Falls. This is one of Jamaica's least visited and most romantic waterfalls. Bathe in the water beneath the rocky cascade (see p 103).

Return to Manchioneal.

15 Dawn's Bar & Snack Stop. Fortify yourself with a bowl of conch soup from this stall, set back from the waterfront (see p 103).

The drive to Kingston, continuing east on the A4, 87km (54 miles), reveals some visually stunning stretches of coastline (see p 107). As you reach the sign for the airport, turn left and continue on Palisadoes Road. It heads out across a spit of land past the airport to Port Royal.

16 Port Royal. This small, isolated town sits at the entrance to Kingston harbor. Once a haven for pirates and privateers including Blackbeard and Captain Morgan, it was known as the 'Wickedest City in Christendom' (see p 107). Stroll around to soak up the atmosphere, then visit **Fort Charles,** the British army's colonial stronghold (see p 107).

Bathe beneath the rocky cascades of Reach Falls.

Return to the A4 and continue westwards. Turn right when the road forks and join Windward Road. Continue straight, turning right at Orange Street and bear left at the fork onto Half Way Tree. At the junction with Oxford Street, turn right to reach Emancipation Park.

17 Emancipation Park. (See p 107). Stopping to look at the striking statue of a male and female nude at the entrance is a must. This piece of art was incredibly controversial as many Jamaicans thought it too lewd and wanted it removed. Head on to dinner at the cosmopolitan **Gallery Café** at The Spanish Court Hotel (see p 150).To find the cafe, continue to the end of the park on Oxford Street, turn left onto Knutsford Boulevard, right onto Trinidad Terrace, and left into St Lucia Avenue.

Day Five

Leave city life behind and head into the Blue Mountains. From Half Way Tree, take the Hope Road and then Old Hope Road to Papine. Turn left and take Gordon Town Road following signs for Irish Town. Shortly after Strawberry Hill you will see the Craighton Estate on your right.

18 Craighton Estate. Tour the terraces of coffee bushes at this plantation while guides explain how the beans are picked and processed, then taste-test a cup of the estate's flavorsome coffee (see p 109).

Continue on the same mountain road past Newcastle (see p 110) to Holywell Recreational Park.

19 Holywell Recreational Park. Spend the afternoon here on one of the cool, shady hiking trails through the mountain landscape. The terrace of **Strawberry Hill** (see p 33) is the place to be at sunset.

Stay for dinner and watch the light fade over the city and mountains.

Day Six

20 Cinchona Gardens. At 1,524m (5,000 ft) above sea level and only reachable by rough, pot-holed tracks, it really is an expedition to get to this historic botanical garden. Ask your hotel to arrange a guide with a 4x4 vehicle to take you. Set off at sunrise and take a picnic. The gardens are at once eerie and magical, and there are panoramic views of the Blue Mountain range (see p 73).

Retrace your route into Kingston and make a stop at 26 Hope Road—the brightly-painted Bob Marley Museum.

21 Bob Marley Museum. Spend an hour touring the former home of Jamaica's most famous son (see p 44), where the guides have a unique insight into the reggae singer's life.

22 Devon House. Just a block away (heading westwards), lies the stately mansion of the country's first black millionaire, George Stiebel (see p 48). Then enjoy dinner at Jamaica's best restaurant—**Norma's on the Terrace**—set in a garden courtyard behind the mansion (see p 53).

Day Seven

23 Hope Botanic Gardens. Spend an hour escaping the buzz of the city in this beautiful garden of palms and exotic flowers (see p 108) before making the three-hour drive to Treasure Beach 137km (85 miles).

Take the A1 toll road out of Kingston towards Mandeville. Pause for a light lunch at the huge Juici Patties outlet at Clarendon Park.

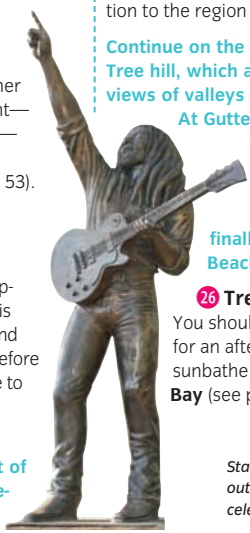
24 Juici Patties. Be prepared to queue at this huge fast-food outlet for their tasty meat- or vegetable-filled pastry snacks. If you are hungry, opt for the speedier service offered by the drive-thru. *Daily 10am–7pm. $.*

Head through Porus, whose celebrated exotic fruit stalls are great for dessert. Then the road climbs to Mandeville.

25 Mandeville. The 'City of the South' sits atop the Don Figuerero Mountains. Much cooler than the coastal towns, early European settlers preferred to reside here. The town still has a colonial feel, with many period houses and well-kept English-style gardens. You may choose to overnight here or spend the afternoon on a **Countrystyle Community Tourism Tour** (see p 117). Led by local people, they give an insightful personal introduction to the region and its customs.

Continue on the A2 down Spur Tree hill, which affords sweeping views of valleys and coastline. At Gutters, turn left and follow signs towards Junction, then Southfield and, finally, Treasure Beach.

26 Treasure Beach. You should be just in time for an afternoon swim and sunbathe at **Frenchman's Bay** (see p 63), a wild,



Statue of Bob Marley outside the museum celebrating his life.

sweeping beauty of a sandy beach. Follow it up with a lantern-lit dinner at **Jake's Place** (see p 156).

Day Eight

Head north from Calabash Bay, at Pedro Cross turn left heading through Newell and Fullerswood. At the T-intersection turn left, then fork right to Black River. Take the A2 through Middle Quarters to Bamboo Avenue.

27 **Bamboo Avenue.** This 4km (2½ mile) stretch of road is covered by a canopy of tall, swaying bamboo. (See p 114).

At the end of Bamboo Avenue turn round and head back to Middle Quarters, turning right at the sign for YS.

28 **YS Falls.** Spend a couple of hours swimming beneath these cooling cascades, framed by flaming-red ginger lilies. Then try the freshly-cooked local dishes at the on-site cafe (see p 115).

Take the road beside the car park, which leads through Maggotty, to the Appleton Rum Estate.

29 **Appleton Rum Estate.** The tour of this historic distillery begins and ends with a tasting of Jamaica's premium brand of rum (see p 115).

Drive back to Treasure Beach. You'll find one of the island's best pizzas at Jack Sprat Restaurant and Bar at Calabash Bay (see p 155).

Day Nine

30 **Calabash Bay.** Start the day with a walk along the beach, or body surfing in the rolling waves that lap the shore (see p 63).

Head north-east to Southfield, then follow signs to Lover's Leap.

31 **Lover's Leap.** This cliff-top viewing point is famed for its romantic tale (see p 113). Have a late breakfast at the restaurant here, with its mesmerizing views of the headland.

Return to Southfield following signs east to Alligator Pond and then Alligator Hole Nature Park.

32 **Alligator Hole Nature Park.** Spend the afternoon boating here in the hope of spotting the gentle and endangered manatees that swim here (see p 113).

Return to Treasure Beach, stopping en route at Alligator Pond.

33 **Little Ochi.** A freshly-cooked seafood dinner on the beach here makes the perfect end to your day (see p 156).

Discover Jamaica's best restaurant, Norma's on the Terrace in the garden courtyard behind Devon House.

Day Ten

Head north from Treasure Beach, turning left at Pedro Cross, then drive through Newell and Williamsfield to Fullerswood. At the T-intersection go left, then left again when the road forks to Parottee Beach.

34 **Pelican Bar.** You'll see this thatch-roofed bar, about 1½km (1 mile) out to sea. Arrange for a local fisherman to take you there for lunch, then spend the afternoon snorkeling in the clear waters beneath the bar (see p 116).

Take the coast road west to Black River, parking at the harbor.

35 **Black River.** Climb aboard a pontoon boat for a safari trip upstream to see the crocodiles that reside in the murky waters here. Allow about two hours (see p 116).

From Black River, take the A2 west for 79km (49 miles), and spend the night in Negril.

Days Eleven & Twelve

36 **Negril.** Explore the north coast's most relaxed resort by following Day One and Day Two of Jamaica in One Week (see p 16).

Black River crocodiles.

Days Thirteen & Fourteen

Head east on the North Coast Highway 84km (52 miles) to Montego Bay.

37 **Montego Bay.** End your trip with two days in Jamaica's liveliest and longest-established resort. Follow Day One and Day Three of Jamaica in a Long Weekend (see p 13) for some of its best sights and sounds.

Sail out to the Pelican Bar for lunch and snorkeling.

3 The Best **Special-Interest Tours**

Jamaica for **Spa Lovers**

Previous page: Cranbrook Flower Forest.

Tourism in Jamaica is synonymous with luxury living. Spa culture plays a significant part in this—from opulent hotel spas to small boutique businesses—offering everything from unadulterated pampering to holistic wellbeing services. Here are my favorites, listed as a tour around the island from north-east to south-east. If you only have one day to spare, choose the nearest spa to your hotel. **START: Ocho Rios. Trip Length: Seven Days.**

1 ★ Red Lane Spa at Royal Plantation (Ocho Rios). The intimate setting and Zen-like aura created by the staff adds to the excellent service and treatments you can expect from the Sandals group. This spa is perfect for mums and daughters seeking a treat and for couples who want to be massaged side by side. *Main Street. ☎ 876-974-5601 or ☎ 876-974-2501. www.royalplantation.com. Body wraps from $100. Daily 9am–7pm. Map p 30.*

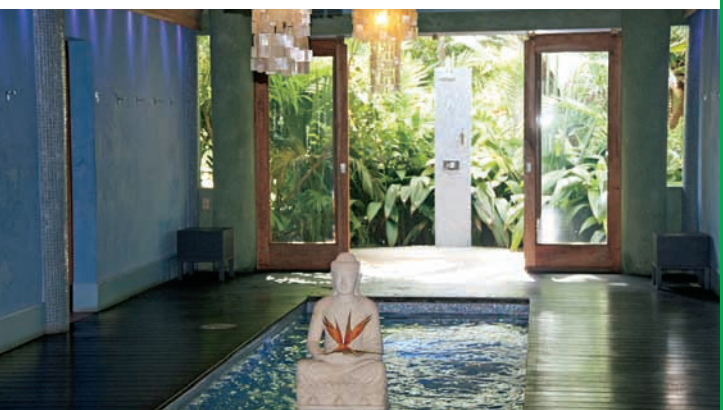
Continue on Main Street through Ocho Rios town center, following the one-way system back on itself to the big yellow twin towers of Sunset Jamaica Grande hotel.

2 ★ Aqua Azul Spa (Ocho Rios). Close to the town center, this spa is perfect for post-shopping relaxation. Neo-classical columns and exotic flower arrangements create a peaceful setting. Treatments are unhurried and have a distinctly Caribbean feel. Seaweed and aloe body wraps and the coffee-sugar scrub that targets cellulite are among the spa menu highlights. *Sunset Jamaica Grande Hotel, Main Street. ☎ 876-974-2200. www.sunsetresortsjamaica.com. Body wraps from $65. Mon–Sat 9am–7pm, Sun 9am–5pm. Map p 30.*

Take the North Coast Highway west for 51km (32 miles) to Rio Bueno.

3 ★ Blue Mahoe Spa (Rio Bueno). The 3½ hr signature Blue Mahoe Package at this small establishment with charming therapists—a mint body polish, tropical mousse wrap, massage, and facial—is the ultimate pampering treat. *Breezes Rio Bueno, North Coast Highway, Rio Bueno. ☎ 876-954-0000. www.breezes.com. Body wraps from $75. Mon–Sat 8.30am–6pm. Sun 8.30am–5pm. Map p 30.*

The Oasis Spa, Negril.



Take the North Coast Highway west for 35km (22 miles) to Rose Hall.

4 ★★★ Spa at the Ritz-Carlton Rose Hall (Montego Bay). Arguably the best spa on the island in terms of sheer indulgence and attentive service. Treatments here include some delightfully thoughtful touches, from fluffy robes and slippers to heated massage tables and aromatherapy eye masks. *North Coast Highway, Rose Hall, Montego Bay. ☎ 876-953-2800. www.ritzcarlton.com. Body wraps from $135. Daily 8am–8pm. Map p 30.*

Head westwards on the North Coast Highway for 98km (61 miles) to Negril.

5 ★★★ The Oasis Spa (Negril). The balance of yin and yang, in the masculine and feminine touches in the decor—dark wood and pastel-colored walls—makes this a good choice for couples. Treatment rooms surround a pool which acts as a muscle-soothing pre-soak bath. The pioneering Californian Burnham System Facial Rejuvenation is available here. Head reflexology and massage are combined to encourage contracted facial muscles to release, reducing wrinkles. *At Couples Swept Away, Norman Manley Boulevard. ☎ 876-957-4061. www.couples.com. Body wraps from $100. Daily 8am–6pm. Map p 30.*

Continue west on Norman Manley Boulevard, turning right at the roundabout onto West End Road 11km (7 miles).

6 ★★ The Caves Aveda Concept Spa (Negril). The ocean breaks on the rocks beneath the treatment room of this boutique cliff-top spa, or you can choose to be pampered in a cave at the water's edge. The after-dark massage is certain to please romantics: the masseuse works in time with the motion of the sea while the moonlight, deflected from the waves, adds to the ambience. *The Caves, West End Road. ☎ 876-957-0270. www.islandoutpost.com/the_caves. Body wraps from $93. Daily 9am–5pm. Map p 30.*

Return to the roundabout. Go straight ahead on the A2 to Black River. Continue east to Fullerswood and Williamsfield. At Pedro Cross turn right. Just 1km (0.62 miles) after the Pedro Plains Police station, you will see Zareeba on the right.

7 ★★ Zareeba Jamaican Herbal Steam Bath (Treasure Beach). Shirley Genus, a Rastafarian herbalist with 25 years' experience, has set up a spa in the beautiful garden of her home. She draws on African traditions to create a uniquely holistic detoxifying experience. Treatments are in a circular stone hut and include inhaling an infusion of fresh herbs (to uplift and cleanse) in a mini steam room, followed by a deep-tissue massage. *Pedro Plains, near Treasure Beach.*

Treatment hut at the Zareeba spa, Treasure Beach.

The Strawberry Hill Living Spa in the Blue Mountains.

☎ 876-965-3820 or ☎ 876-827-2447. smgenus@hotmail.com. Treatment costs from $75. Call ahead for appointment. Map p 30.

8 **Winsome's Tropical Restaurant.** Just south of Zareeba at Frenchman's Bay, Winsome serves delicious natural juices and homemade soups. The coconut cream and pumpkin mix is particularly moreish. *☎ 876-432-7576. $–$$. No credit cards. Sun–Fri 8am–9pm. Map p 30.*

Return to Pedro Cross. Turn and follow signs to Southfield, Junction, Lititz, and Spur Tree. Take the A2 through Mandeville to Kingston. At the end of the highway, continue straight on Washington Boulevard. Turn right at Constant Spring Road, then left onto Hope Road. At Papine, turn left and head into the Blue Mountains, following signs to Irish Town.

9 ★★★ **The Strawberry Hill Living Spa (Blue Mountains).** Frequented by Kingston's elite, rock stars and bachelorette parties. The treatments are based on Ayurvedic principles and are designed to restore harmony to mind, body, and spirit. This ancient Indian philosophy defines people by type—fire, earth, water, and air. A questionnaire ascertains your element so therapists can suggest appropriate treatments. *Strawberry Hill Hotel, Irish Town. ☎ 876-944-8400. www.islandoutpost.com/strawberry_hill. Body wraps from $95. Daily 9am–5pm. Map p 30.*

Continue north on the same road towards Newcastle for 9.5km (6 miles).

10 ★ **Euphoria Skin-Care & Spa (Blue Mountains).** This rustic, bohemian spa consists of a single wooden-hut treatment room raised on stilts. Surrounded by rainforest, the only sounds you will hear are birdsong and the flowing waters of a nearby river. Spa manager Zenia Campbell makes the essential oils from locally-sourced ingredients. The sweet-orange is particularly aromatic and soothing, and the full-body massage a must. *Mount Edge Guest House. ☎ 876-887-5817 or ☎ 876-456-5138. Cash only. Body wraps from $40. Daily 9am–9pm. Map p 30.*

Jamaica for **Shoppers**

Souvenir vendors abound here, selling similar wares: reggae T-shirts, tie-dye sarongs, gaudy paintings of sunsets, and Caribbean-themed woodcarvings. However, if you know where to look, you can find more authentic and unique keepsakes. These are my shopping highlights. As they are spread island-wide, I have listed them by location, from north-east to south-east.

1 ★ Harmony Hall (Ocho Rios). Collectables and Jamaican artwork are sold from this restored historic house. Take home a creative piece from an established or up-and-coming artist. Your purchase may even gain in value. Worldwide shipping can be arranged. *See p 98.*

2 kids Island Village (Ocho Rios). Close to the cruise ship dock, even on busy days this is the most relaxing place to shop in town. Designed to look like a village of gabled clap-board houses, it is also the most picturesque of all Ochi's shopping centers. Here you'll find a mix of boutiques, duty-free and souvenir shops linked by a boardwalk. With free entertainment, restaurants, and a small beach all within a short walk, it is also a handy choice for those who need to combine shopping with keeping the kids amused. *Turtle River Road. ☎ 876-675-8995. www.islandvillageja.com. Daily 9am–5pm. Map p 34.*

3 ★ Bend Down Market (Falmouth). This weekly market brings the town center to life. People flock here from neighboring towns—as much to watch and be part of the busy, bustling spectacle as to buy the vast range of foods and bric-a-brac on sale. Traders spill out of the marketplace and into the streets, setting out their jumble of goods on the floor for buyers to rummage through—hence the market's name 'bend down'. Spices and Dutch pots are among the best buys. *Wed 8am–noon. Map p 34.*

4 ★ The Shoppes at Rose Hall (Montego Bay). A high-end, open-air mall, designed to look like a Georgian town. Rolex, Lladro, Chopard, Movado, and Tiffany & Co

Collectables and Jamaican artwork are sold at Harmony Hall.

are among the retailers. These duty-free shops cluster around a garden courtyard, which is dotted with palm trees and leads to a water-wheel and fountain. A complimentary shuttle bus is available through the concierge desk at many resort hotels. *North Coast Highway, opposite Rose Hall Great House. ☎ 876-953-3245. www.srhja.com. Daily 10am–6pm. Closed May to July. Map p 34.*

5 ★★ Gloucester Avenue (Montego Bay). The shops that line the 'Hip Strip' are great fun to browse. Between them, they sell everything from Cuban cigars and drums to beach towels and children's clothes. Walk up one side of the street between Doctor's Cave Beach and Margaritaville, then back down the other and you should be able to get all your souvenir shopping wrapped up.

6 Time Square (Negril). This modern, functional, purpose-built mall is close to the beach hotels, and a short distance away from the hectic downtown area. It is the best place to buy duty-free goods in resort. Stores include Mont Blanc, Cartier, and Franco Pianegonda.

Find all sorts at Bend Down Market.

The charming Callaloo, Treasure Beach.

Norman Manley Boulevard. ☎ 876-957-9263, www.timesquareplaza.com. Call ahead for opening times as these vary.

7 ★ Craft Market (Negril). Set in a great location at the southern end of Long Bay beach, beside the rows of fishing boats that rest where the Negril River meets the ocean, this is my favorite craft market on the island—for the sheer variety of goods on offer from its hotchpotch of stalls. *Norman Manley Boulevard. Daily 10am–6pm. Map p 34.*

8 ★★★ Callaloo (Treasure Beach). This charming little store is as alluring as the goods it sells. Designed to resemble a clap-board cottage and decorated with fretwork, it is the creation of a French dress designer who now resides in Treasure Beach. The interior is filled with locally-made temptations—ornaments, dresses, cookware, photo frames, jewelry, toys, bags, and soft furnishings—all genuinely Jamaican keep-sakes. *Just west of Jake's. Daily 9am–6pm. Map p 34.*

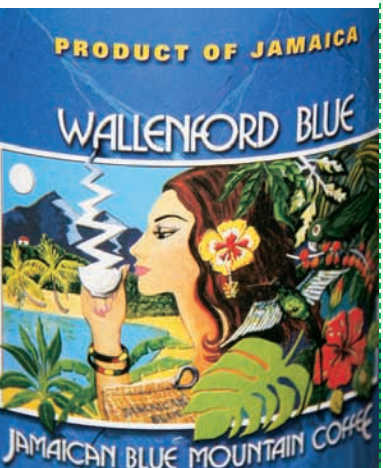
9 ★★ Devon House (Kingston). The collection of small retail outlets in the old stable yard behind

Devon House (see p 48) sell a range of high-quality gifts. Check out **Ts and Treasures; Things Jamaican;** and **Wassi Art** for crafts, carvings, ceramics, and clothing. Neighboring **Rum, Roasts and Royals** sells liquor, cigars, coffee, and beautifully-presented preserves and spices. The complex is also home to a branch of **Starfish Oils**, the island's excellent aromatherapy candle and skin-care product producer. I have found that gift items tend to be cheaper to purchase here than in the tourist resorts. ***26 Hope Road. ☎ 876-929-6602. www.devonhousejamaica.com. Mon–Sat 10am–6pm. Map p 34.***

10 Bob Marley Museum Shop (Kingston). This extensive store has the best selection of Bob Marley T-shirts and merchandise on the island and can also be visited by those not taking the museum tour (see p 44). ***56 Hope Road. ☎ 876-927-9152. www.bobmarleyfoundation.com/museum. Mon–Sat 9.30am–4pm, Sun 8am–2pm. Map p 34.***

11 Café Blue (Blue Mountains). Lovers of authentic souvenirs and culinary gifts will find a selection of tempting goodies on the shelves at this tiny coffee shop. Many are created from the fragrances, spices, and produce that are synonymous with Jamaica and include pepper jam, ginger-scented candles, chutneys, and decorative mugs. ***See p 150.***

For high-quality gifts, visit the stable yard shops behind Devon House.



Tin of Jamaican Blue Mountain coffee.

Travel Tip

Do your homework before you head into the duty-free stores. The salesmen are smooth talkers and can soon convince you that, if you walk away, you're missing out on the opportunity of a lifetime. In reality, some goods are excellent value while others aren't. Whether it is a designer watch or a diamond ring that you hope to buy, it's wise to price the item up at home before you arrive. You'll then be able to negotiate a discount that you are happy with and one that warrants making the purchase overseas, where the item will be harder to return if it is faulty.

Jamaica with **Children**

1. Mystic Mountain
2. Dolphin Cove at Treasure Reef
3. Cranbrook Flower Forest
4. Columbus Park
5. Outameni
6. Kool Runnings Water Park
7. Cosmo's Seafood Restaurant & Bar
8. Rick's Café
9. Holywell Recreation Park

As well as sun, sea, and sand there is so much to stimulate, educate, and delight children here. Learning about Jamaica's colorful culture and history is fun, thanks to some innovative hands-on attractions; the nature reserves, gardens, and theme parks make it easy for young people to enjoy the flora and marine life; while the more universal theme parks are simply rip-roaring fun. Together they combine to create lasting memories. Here's my selection of the island's best, arranged from east to west. Some warrant a full day and so are not organized into a tour.

1 Mystic Mountain (Ocho Rios). The bobsleigh roller-coaster ride 213m (700 ft) above sea level, and the Indiana Jones-style zip-wire trail (that takes you downhill through a mass of thickly-tangled rainforest) are designed to thrill teenagers. In addition the attraction's infinity pool with its waterslide provides the perfect place for a family swim. *3hr. North Coast Highway, 2km (1.5 miles) west of Ocho Rios. 876-974-3990. Admission $42. www.rainforestrams.com. Daily 8.30am–5.30pm. Map p 38.*

2 Dolphin Cove at Treasure Reef (Ocho Rios). A range of packages here enable adults and children over eight to stroke, kiss, or swim with dolphins, feed sharks, and hold barb-less sting rays. The pirate-themed boardwalk, nature trail, shallow sandy beach, and dolphin shows will appeal to younger children. Boat rides, glass-bottomed kayaking, and snorkeling add to the fun-packed day out. This is one of Jamaica's most popular attractions, so booking at least two weeks in advance is usually essential for the animal encounters. *3hr–full day. North Coast Highway, 4km (2.5 miles) west of Ocho Rios town center. 876-974-5335. www.dolphincovejamaica.com. Daily 8.30am–5.30pm. See p 101. Map p 38.*

3 ★ Cranbrook Flower Forest. (Runaway Bay). Active children will love running free along the gently-undulating river trail at this garden, which ends at a hidden waterfall. The natural pool beside the cascade is ideal for paddling.

The river trail at Cranbrook Flower Forest.

There's also a picnic area that has a playground with swings, volleyball net, and basketball ring. 🕘 *3hr–full day. North Coast Highway 6.5km (4 miles) east of Runaway Bay. See p 74.*

4 **Columbus Park (Discovery Bay).** Children can literally run around and climb over history at this small outdoor museum. It is an imaginative way to introduce youngsters to aqueducts, waterwheels, galleons, and other ground-breaking inventions of the colonial era. Follow this with some time at Puerto Seco public beach, just 1.5km (1 mile) to the east. Shallow waters, clean sand, and full facilities warrant the entrance fee, even if the view of the bauxite plant means this isn't the prettiest stretch of coast. 🕘 *1hr–full day, if combined with Puerto Seco Beach. North Coast Highway at Discovery Bay, 8km (5 miles) west of Runaway Bay. Daily 9am–5pm. Admission free. Puerto Seco: adults $5, children $3.*

5 ★ **Outameni (Falmouth).** Travel back in time to discover Jamaica's past at this interactive museum-cum-theme park. Through story-telling, music, and dance, actors in period dress lead you through a series of superb stage sets to present a lively potted cultural and social history tour of the island. 🕘 *2hr. See p 95.*

6 ★ **Kool Runnings Water Park (Negril).** An action-packed alternative to a relaxing day at the beach—the slides and chutes send you spinning or flying into swimming pools. There's also a lazy river ride to float around in for the less intrepid. The entertainment team organizes children's games daily, and there are music and dance shows and a DJ spinning popular tunes. For an additional cost, the park's Anancy Village zone offers go-kart rides, bungee trampolines, and a carousel. 🕘 *4hr. Norman Manley Boulevard. ☎ 876-957-5400. www.koolrunnings.com. Admission: adults $28, children under 48 inches tall $19. Wed, Sat, Sun and public holidays 11am–6pm. The park is often open at additional times in high season, and generally closes for the entire month of September for refurbishment. Map p 38.*

7 **Cosmo's Seafood Restaurant & Bar** serves burgers and sandwiches at picnic tables right on the beach, just east of Kool Runnings Water Park. Laid-back and family friendly there's no need for children to sit still and behave here. Lunch can be enjoyed between running in and out of the sea. *$. See p 144.*

8 **Rick's Café (Negril).** This is the best place in Negril for early evening family entertainment, especially if you have children of different ages to keep happy simultaneously. Watch as local boys jump off the cliff top and perform acrobatics in

Cosmo's Seafood Restaurant & Bar.

Enjoy the easy nature trails at the Holywell Recreation Park.

mid-air, egged on by the cheering crowd. Lower down the cliff face there are mini platforms where teens can hold their noses and jump into the sea too. The cafe bar is famed for its view of the sunset (see p 17). At dusk an easy-listening reggae band strikes up and dancing is encouraged. The venue generally attracts a wide age range, except during Spring Break when the twenty-something crowd ensures things get rowdy. 🕘 ***2–3hr. See p 144.***

Travel Tip

Jamaica struggles to shed its image of being a country beset by crime and drugs issues and therefore challenging to travel around. While these issues persist in a few inner-city areas (areas that hold no interest for tourists anyhow), generally I have found traveling around the island, even when alone, to be a safe and rewarding experience. Jamaicans are proud of their country and delighted when visitors—and especially families with children—venture beyond their hotel gates to see the 'real Jamaica', as you will often hear it referred to.

9 Holywell Recreation Park (Blue Mountains). The fantastical jungle-like habitat of this slice of the Blue Mountains will inspire children of all ages who have a fascination with the natural world. Families can count the number of birds and flowers they spot on the easy trails through this nature reserve. You might spot woodpeckers, or the Jamaican Tody—the national bird, which is a small, plump bird with bright green plumage. The creeping vines and bromeliads—curious palm-like plants that attach themselves to tree trunks—should also add a wow factor. Several walks were designed with young families in mind and cover less than a kilometer, while teenagers might like to try the longer, more adventurous hikes that involve ascents to view points. 🕘 ***4hr–full day. See p 11.***

Jamaica for Music Lovers

Music is the heartbeat of Jamaica. Every bus, taxi, car, bar, and street stall seems to lilt its own rhythms. This is, of course, the birthplace of reggae and the world's best-known reggae star, Bob Marley. Images of the idol adorn T-shirts in every store, wall murals, fishing boats, and even houses. Avid fans can tour the places most significant to his life. Here are my favorites, together with some of the island's best music attractions. The tour runs from north-east to south-east. **START: Port Antonio. Length: Three days.**

1 Gee Jam (Port Antonio). Gee Jam gives you a taste of what it is to be a music star and so is the ultimate base for aspiring musicians or keen amateurs. A stay here comes complete with studio time. Non guests can also book the state-of-the-art recording suite complete with sound engineer. Stars that have recorded or stayed here include India Arie, Bjork, Wyclef Jean, Gwen Stefani, PM Dawn, and Roy Ayers. See p 137.

Take the North Coast Highway westwards to Ocho Rios town center.

2 ★ Reggae Explosion (Ocho Rios). This fun, dimly-lit museum with a nightclub vibe is sure to have you singing along or, at the very least, get your feet tapping. It recounts the evolution of the musical genres that have rocked Jamaica (and often the world) over the decades: mento, ska, rocksteady, reggae, dub, dancehall… listen to them all and read about the stars that were pivotal in promoting each sound. See p 99.

Take the North Coast Highway west, turning left at the sign for Brown's Town. Head south to Alexandria and then follow signs to the Bob Marley Mausoleum.

3 ★ Bob Marley Mausoleum (Nine Mile). Flags flying the distinctive Rastafarian colors of gold, red, and green mark the childhood home of the world's most famous reggae singer, at the heart of rural Jamaica. Bob Marley's humble roots in the hamlet of Nine Mile belie his eventual fame. See the house where he was born; the two-room hut he was raised in by his mother until he was 13; and the inspiration stone he

Bob Marley's former townhouse is now a museum.

Bob Marley

Born on 6th February 1945 to a white Jamaican father and black Jamaican mother, Bob was raised in the countryside by his mother. They moved to Kingston's Trenchtown inner-city ghetto when Bob was 13, where his love of music was ignited. He formed the Wailers in 1966 with Bunny Wailer and Peter Tosh. In 1972, Chris Blackwell signed the group to Island Records and their rise to international stardom began. After the group separated in 1974 Marley went solo, still keeping the band's name. When he agreed to sing at the Smile Jamaica concert in 1976 organized by the ruling party, opposition supporters made an attempt on his life. Despite his injuries, Bob performed anyway, pleading for an end to sectarian violence. He convalesced in the mountains at Strawberry Hill (see p 149), continuing to record his music, and then embarked on European and North American tours. In 1980, when he was diagnosed with brain cancer, Bob was an international star and multimillionaire. He died in May 1981, aged 36.

sat upon to meditate. The tour is led by enthusiastic Rastafarian devotees and culminates with visitors being invited to pay their respects beside the marble mausoleum within a small Ethiopian church where the star and his guitar are buried. The tour is a moving experience for all those who admire the King of Reggae. 🕘 *2hr. Nine Mile, St Ann.* ☎ *876-995-1763. www.bobmarleymovement.com. Daily 9am–5pm. $15 per person.*

Bob Marley Mausoleum, Nine Mile.

Return to Alexandria and the B3. Head south to May Pen, then pick up the A2 to Kingston. When the highway ends, continue straight on Washington Boulevard. Turn right at Constant Spring Road and left onto Hope Road.

4 **Bob Marley Museum (Kingston).** Bob Marley's former home—a fine clap-board Kingston townhouse painted in Rasta colors—provides a unique glimpse into

the daily life of this legendary reggae star after his rise to fame. Learn about his life, family, loves, struggles, and career through various memorabilia: photos of concerts, the magazine and newspaper articles pasted on the walls; his favorite denim shirt which hangs in a cabinet; and the mass of platinum and gold discs which are a tribute to his massive acclaim. His bedroom remains as if he was still living here, and a recreation of the record shop he once ran has been constructed in one of the rooms. You'll also get the chance to go inside the room where Marley was shot in a failed assassination attempt. The bullet holes in the walls remain. Guides will have you singing choruses of Bob's biggest hits in between telling you insider anecdotes, but the highlight of the tour is an emotional film celebrating the singer's tragically short life. *2hr. 56 Hope Road. 876-927-9152. www.bobmarley-foundation.com/museum. Admission: adults $20, children 4–12 $10. Entrance by guided tour only. Map p 42.*

5 Roots Reggae Tour (Kingston). For serious Bob Marley fans only, follow the Roots Reggae Tour, which takes in Bob Marley and the Wailers' former haunts, including Studio 1 and Trenchtown. This full-day experience is led by Maria Carla Gullotto (proprietor of Drapers San Guesthouse in Port Antonio, see p 137), and finishes with a visit to one or more of the hottest and most popular dancehalls in Kingston. This tour must be booked in advance (for a minimum of three people). *full day. 876-993-7118. E-mail carla-51@cwjamaica.com. $110.*

Head east out of Kingston on Hope Road (which becomes Old Hope Road). Turn left at Papine, heading into the Blue Mountains and follow signs to Irish Town.

Strawberry Hill is a must for music fans.

6 Strawberry Hill (Blue Mountains). This is a must for serious music fans and Marley fans alike. Bob recuperated at Strawberry Hill after the attempt on his life and continued writing music for his later albums at this Blue Mountain hideaway. Owned by Chris Blackwell, founder of Island Records, the walls of the conference room offer a fascinating retrospective on the record label's last four decades, as well as some personal photographs, including images of Mick Jagger, Peter Tosh, and Millie Small. The room glitters with platinum and gold discs. One entire wall of them was earned from the sale of Bob Marley and the Wailers' LPs alone. *See p 149.*

Travel Tip

If you're a music fan planning to stay in Negril, it's worth checking out who is playing in town before choosing your dates. Veteran reggae superstars such as Marcia Griffiths, John Holt, Gregory Isaacs, and Freddie McGregor frequently play the beach and waterfront venues here.

Day 1
1 Columbus Park
2 Falmouth
Day 2
3 Newcastle
4 Devon House
5 The Brick Oven
6 Port Royal
Puerto Seco Beach
Discovery Bay
Falmouth
A1
Runaway Bay
St. Ann's Bay
Turtle Beach
Mallards Beach
Ocho Rios
A3
Oracabessa
Martha Brae River
B5
B3
Albert Town
Alexandria
Claremont
Port Maria
Annotto Bay
Buff Bay
Hope Bay
Navy Island
San San Beach
Boston Beach
Port Antonio
Boston Bay
Long Bay
Manchioneal
Rio Grande
BLUE MOUNTAINS
Castleton
Ewarton
Christiana
Frankfield
Linstead
A1
A3
B1
A4
Mandeville
A2
Santa Cruz
Chapelton
Spanish Town
Newcastle
Kingston
Golden Grove
May Pen
Portmore
Kingston Harbour
Bull Bay
Morant Bay
Bowden
Old Harbour
Port Royal
Norman Manley Int'l Airport
Bull Savannah
Galleon Harbour
Yallahs
Long Bay
Lionel Town
CARIBBEAN SEA
Carlisle Bay
Airport
Beach
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Although Jamaica has lost much of its heritage to time and tide, there are still some evocative attractions that give a glimpse of the island's colonial past. This tour covers some of the most remarkable buildings and key historic locations. It is designed to be experienced as two separate day trips: the first takes in two north-coast attractions starting at Discovery Bay; the second is spent in Kingston and the Blue Mountains.

Day One

1 Columbus Park (Discovery Bay). This roadside park overlooking the sea is of key significance to Jamaica's modern history. Marking the spot where Christopher Columbus first landed in Jamaica in 1494, it contains an eclectic mix of archaic contraptions, inventions, and exhibits including a waterwheel and early agricultural equipment used on the plantations. A walk around this windswept, cliff-top look-out point (following the information plaques) takes you back in time to the arrival of the first European settlers. *1hr. North Coast Highway, Discovery Bay. Daily 9am–5pm. Admission free.*

Follow the North Coast Highway 37km (23 miles) west to Falmouth.

2 ★★ Falmouth (Trelawny). Falmouth was once the busiest and most successful port on the north coast. The town rose to prominence soon after it was founded in 1790. Dyes, rum, and sugar from surrounding plantations were exported, and slaves imported, enabling the plantations to expand and increase their production. Beautiful Georgian town houses sprung up as a result of the port's wealth. Crafted from wood and stone they were lavished with semi-circular wrought-iron arches and delicate fretwork porticos, verandas, and balconies. Many remain in excellent repair today, while others are in desperate need of renovation.

The town also boasts the greatest concentration of late 18th-century architecture on the island. Stand by the fountain in Water Square to see a couple of the finest examples: the Albert George Shopping and Historical Centre on one side of the square was named after two of Queen Victoria's sons, and is now a craft market; on the other side of the square is the Falmouth Courthouse, rebuilt following a fire in 1926. The attractive Baptist

Georgian town house in Falmouth.

manse in nearby Market Street was once home to William Knibb, who fought for the abolition of slavery. The photogenic Barrett House next door was owned by the family of English poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Other noteworthy buildings include the ancient St Peter's Anglican Church and the evocative William Knibb Memorial Church, where shackles, chains, and a whip are buried in a coffin in the churchyard to symbolize the death of slavery on 1st August 1838. 🕘 *3hr. Admission free.*

Day Two

3 Newcastle (Blue Mountains). This historic and distinguished barracks stands 1,219m (4,000 ft) above Kingston. The British military decamped here in 1841 from the city below to escape the yellow fever and malaria that were plaguing servicemen stationed in the plains. A wall of badges in the parade ground shows the regiments that served here. Newcastle is now a base for the Jamaican Defense Force, who you might be lucky enough to see being drilled. *See p 110.* 🕘 *1hr. Admission free.*

From Newcastle head downhill to Papine, turn right onto Old Hope Road which becomes Hope Road.

4 ★★ Devon House (Kingston). This elaborately-crafted Georgian Great House was magnificently restored in the late 1960s, and was declared a national monument by the Jamaican National Heritage Trust in 1990. It's the last remaining of three historic homes owned by rich black Jamaicans of that era that once stood at the junction of Trafalgar Road and Hope Road—an area known as Millionaire's Corner. The other two properties were demolished to make way for new developments, but Devon House still stands as the dream home of George Steibel (see p 108). His father was a German Jew, his mother a Jamaican housekeeper, and he made his fortune gold-mining in Venezuela. A guided tour (included in the price of the entrance fee) takes you through the rooms adorned in fine art, Caribbean and European antiques, and replicas of the era. 🕘 *3hr. 26 Hope Road.* ☎ *876-929-6602. www.devonhousejamaica.com. Admission $5. Mon–Sat 9.30am–4.30pm. Map p 46.*

A wall of regiment's badges in Newcastle barracks.

Pirates of the Caribbean

Surprisingly, pirates and the British forces stationed in Port Royal co-existed quite amicably. The Royal Navy was at full stretch defending the island from Spanish and French invasion. They didn't have the resources to tackle the problem of piracy head on, so they turned it to their advantage. A deal was struck whereby the pirates were renamed privateers. As long as they didn't attack British ships and a proportion of their stolen treasures was passed on to the Crown, their dubious actions were overlooked. Port Royal became the pirates' official safe haven in the Caribbean. As well as seeking rest and relaxation in the bars, brothels, and gambling dens that filled the city's streets, privateers stocked up on supplies and fresh water before setting sail to ransack Spanish settlements and plunder their trading vessels. The city's most famous privateer is Captain Henry Morgan. Possibly best known for the brand of rum named after him, Morgan went on to be knighted and made a governor of Jamaica. In June 1692, the high jinks of the pirates of Port Royal came to a sorry end when a catastrophic earthquake sank most of the city. Law-abiding citizens considered this to be divine intervention.

5 **The Brick Oven.** Pick up a freshly-baked slice of cake here, in the walled garden shopping area behind Devon House, or try a scoop of the 27 flavors of ice cream sold at Devon House I Scream. Jamaica's number one brand includes stout and mango varieties. ☎ *876-968-2153 and* ☎ *876-929-7028. www.devonhousejamaica.com. $*

Follow signs to the airport and then Port Royal.

6 ★ **Port Royal (Kingston).** The British Government overthrew Spanish forces to claim Jamaica as its own in 1655 and made Port Royal its first capital city. The only surviving structure of the time is Fort Charles. Built in 1662, it is the oldest remaining building of the British colonial era in Jamaica. There is an informative museum within the grounds and a recreation of the former quarters of Admiral Horatio Nelson, who was stationed here in the late 1770s, charged with quelling French attacks. At the time, Fort Charles had 104 guns trained at the entrance to Kingston harbor. *See p 106.*

Cannons line the wall at Port Royal.

1 Boston Bay Jerk Centre
2 Toscanini's
3 The Dinner Terrace at Jamaica Inn
4 Passage to India
5 Little Ochi
6 Norma's on the Terrace
Puerto Seco Beach
Runaway Bay
Falmouth
A1
Discovery Bay
St. Ann's Bay
Mallards Beach
Ocho Rios
A3
Oracabessa
Martha Brae River
B5
B3
Albert Town
Alexandria
Claremont
Port Maria
Annotto Bay
Buff Bay
Hope Bay
Navy Island
San San Beach
Boston Beach
Port Antonio
Boston Bay
Long Bay
Rio Grande
Manchioneal
Castleton
Ewarton
Christiana
Frankfield
Linstead
BLUE MOUNTAINS
B1
Newcastle
Mandeville
A2
Santa Cruz
Chapelton
Spanish Town
Kingston
A4
Golden Grove
May Pen
Portmore
Kingston Harbour
Old Harbour
Port Royal
Norman Manley Int'l Airport
Bull Bay
Morant Bay
Bowden
Bull Savannah
Galleon Harbour
Yallahs
Long Bay
Lionel Town
CARIBBEAN SEA
Carlisle Bay
Airport
Beach
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10 km
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These are the eateries I consider to be the best on the island. They are listed from north-east to south-east. Due to the geographical distance between them and their diversity I have not recommended that they be visited as a tour. However, all are worth seeking out in their own right as you explore the island. Be sure not to miss any close to your chosen accommodation.

1 Boston Bay Jerk Centre BOSTON BEACH *JAMAICAN* Famous for its jerk pork, said to be the best on the island, a group of imaginatively-painted stalls vie for your business at this popular road stop. Some Jamaicans drive for miles to snack here, and the chefs believe themselves to be the 'kings of jerk cookery' (see p 138). The pork is good but the chicken is better, and the jerk sauce it comes smothered in is quite the best I have tasted, both potent and flavorful. You can even buy some to take home with you, roughly bottled in old sauce jars. ***North Coast Highway, east of Port Antonio. ☎ 876-974-8759. Mains $6–10. No credit cards.11am–midnight. Map p 50.***

2 ★★ Toscanini's TOWER ISLE *ITALIAN* The brother and sister team who run this enchanting Italian restaurant are passionate about food and strive to maintain very high standards. Only the best quality ingredients make it into talented chef PG Ricci's daily specials. Real buffalo mozzarella and other staple ingredients are flown in from Italy; fresh fish is bought daily from a trusted network of fishermen island-wide and the salad leaves are sourced from a nearby organic farm. Lella Ricci runs front of house with style and ensures everyone receives a warm Italian family welcome and a personal tour of the extensive and varied menu. With a selection of three or four meat-free mains, this is also an excellent choice for vegetarians. ***North Coast Highway, east of Ocho Rios ☎ 876-975-4785. Mains $17–38. Daily Noon–2.30pm and 6.30–10.30pm. AE, MC, V. www.harmonyhall.com/gallery/toscanini. Map p 50.***

An extensive Italian menu is offered at Toscanini's.

3 ★★ The Dinner Terrace at Jamaica Inn MAIN STREET *INTERNATIONAL* Expect royal treatment at this exceptional restaurant, where Sir Winston Churchill and Marilyn Monroe once dined. Arrive before dusk for a sun-downer and canapés on the terrace to the accompaniment of live music. Move to one of the candlelit tables in the dining room that face the sea and the illuminated tropical gardens. Impeccable, graceful service, sterling silver cutlery, and crisp white table cloths are matched by delicious, high-quality fish and meat

Dine in a palm-thatched hut at Little Ochi.

dishes. The steaks and flourless chocolate cake are highlights. In my opinion, this is the most refined restaurant on the island. ***Jamaica Inn, Main Street, Ocho Rios ☎ 876-974-2514. Mains $18–45. Daily 7.30am–9.30pm. AE, MC, V. www.jamaicainn.com. Map p 50.***

4 ★ **Passage to India** TOWN CENTER *INDIAN* This quality restaurant was established by an Indian-born trio, Anil and Rajni Sud and Rajiv Bhatnagar, who worked in some of the island's top hotels before starting their own business here. Determined to create an authentic culinary experience for their diners, clay ovens were imported from India to cook their range of specialty breads and tandoori meat dishes. The basmati rice and spices are also from India. I thoroughly recommend the rich Chicken RaRa with its fusion of spices to tantalize the taste buds, and the naan breads melt in the mouth, too. ***In Soni's Plaza shopping center, 50 Main Street, Ocho Rios ☎ 876-795-3182. Mains $12–35. Tues–Sun 11.30am–10pm. AE, MC, V. www.passagetoindiaja.com. Map p 50.***

Exotic Cuisine

Something the best street stalls and the finest restaurants have in common is the freshness of their ingredients. Jamaica's produce is hugely varied due to the range of fruit and vegetables introduced from across the globe by early European settlers. In addition, many crops have several harvests, thanks to the favorable climate. Although a great deal of food is imported, the clever fusion of local and international ingredients sets some eateries apart.

5 ★ **Little Ochi** ALLIGATOR POND *SEAFOOD/JAMAICAN* No sooner is it landed than the fish and seafood is steamed, griddled, fried, or barbecued—however you request. Try the jerk, garlic, curried, or peppered shrimp or lobster. All are out of this world. The open kitchen, where you can watch your dish being prepared, is as basic as the tables and benches you'll eat at, seated in quirky palm-thatched huts shaped like canoes on a rugged slice of south coast beach. There's no attempt to shed the feel of

eating picnic-style beside a seaside fish shack but, in truth, this is the best place to eat seafood alfresco on the island. ***Alligator Pond, Manchester, south coast. ☎ 876-382-3375 or ☎ 876-610-6566. Mains $15–35. No credit cards. Daily 8am–last customer. Map p 50.***

6 ★★★ Norma's on the Terrace AT DEVON HOUSE *JAMAICAN/MEDITERRANEAN /INTERNATIONAL* This is generally considered to be the best restaurant on the island, and I would tend to agree. It is the flagship restaurant of Jamaica's best-known and much-loved chef Norma Shirley. The Gordon Ramsey of the nation, Norma has exacting standards that she is not afraid to express to her sous-chefs, who are kept constantly on their toes. Norma sources the freshest, finest seasonal ingredients and then uses her international culinary experience to create sensational dishes that merge, among others, her favored Asian, Caribbean, and Latino influences. Try the chicken breast stuffed with crab meat; or jerked pork, marinated in local Red Stripe beer and Teriyaki, then stuffed with rum-soaked prunes and raisins. Even the setting is delightful: a breeze-kissed terrace shrouded by ginger lilies and shaded by white plantation shutters. ***26 Hope Road,***

Norma's on the Terrace.

Kingston, ☎ 876-968-5488. Mains $18–32. Mon–Sat 10am–10pm. AE, MC, V. Map p 50.

Travel Tip

When touring the island, if you need a snack or a cool drink look out for the produce stalls that appear at the roadside. Coconuts are a popular offering. The seller will deftly remove the top of the green husk with a machete while holding the coconut in their other hand. You can then drink the water within before it is broken open for you to enjoy the flesh or 'jelly'. Sugar cane juice is another typical thirst-quencher or you can buy a bag of sugar cane sticks to gnaw on during your journey.

Try a Jamaican breakfast of akee and salt fish.

Jamaica for **Romantics**

Jamaica is made for lovers. The gentle pace of island life, luxury accommodation, miles of shoreline, exotic food and flowers, and the ritual cocktail at sunset can't help but bring out the romantic in you. There are even attractions which seem to have been created with couples in mind. Here are some of my favorites. Many involve watching the sunset, so I have grouped them by location.

1 Martha Brae River Rafting (Falmouth). An essential trip for lovers. Simply sit back and relax on a 9m (30 ft) bamboo raft made for two for a gentle ride down the river. A raft captain, Jamaica's version of a Venetian gondolier, uses a bamboo pole to glide your craft through florid rainforest. The meandering journey covers 5.6km (3 miles) and takes around 90 minutes. Set off, with rum punch in hand, to the accompaniment of a traditional *mento* (see p 93) band on the river bank at the Rafters' Village. ***2hr. Martha Brae, nr Falmouth. 876-952-0889. www.jamaicarafting.com. $60 per two-person raft. Daily 9am–4pm. Map p 54.***

The sweeping cliff-top location of Lovers Leap.

2 ★ Luminous Lagoon (Falmouth). A boat ride after sunset takes you to see a natural phenomenon that creates an underwater light show, where the warm, shallow, brackish waters give rise to micro-organisms that emit a blue glow when disturbed. The tour boat's wake sets the water aglow, and then stops so you can take a dip in the illuminated waters beneath the starry sky—an intimate, once-in-a-lifetime experience (see p 95). ***1hr. Rock, Falmouth. 876-954-3229. www.glistening waters.com. $20. Daily 9am–8pm. Map p 54.***

Travel Tip

The many 'couples-only' hotels on the island encourage romance and decadence with their luxurious extras, ranging from private pools to butler service. Consider the Royal Plantation (see p 132) or the waterfront cottages at Jamaica Inn (see p 132), both in Ocho Rios, for the ultimate indulgent treat.

3 Rockhouse Restaurant & Bar (Negril). Be sure to take one of the cozy candlelit tables for two at this romantic bar built into the limestone cliff-face in time for cocktails at sunset. The enchanting patio here seems to have been created with lovers in mind. ***2hr. West End Road, Negril. 876-957-4373. www.rockhousehotel.com. AE, MC, V. Daily 7.30am–10pm. Map p 54.***

Tying the Knot

Jamaica is a Mecca for honeymooners, and even saying your vows here requires very little paperwork. Prior application must be made for a marriage license. Most hotels or tour operators will arrange one for you. Once you have this you can get married within 24 hours of arrival. You will also need to provide proof of citizenship by an original birth certificate that states your father's name, a divorce certificate if applicable, or a death certificate of your former spouse if you are a widow or widower. Those who are traveling independently will need to get in contact with the Ministry of Justice directly to arrange their marriage license (☎ 876-906-4923, customerservice@moj.gov.jm). This costs around $65. Non-denominational marriage officers charge between $50 and $250 to conduct the service. They are sanctioned to marry couples at their office or at a place chosen by the couple. Visit www.visitjamaica.com for a list of recommended marriage officers by resort.

4 ★ **Lovers' Leap (Treasure Beach).** This location is not only the most dramatic, sweeping, cliff-top vista on the south coast, but it is also where Jamaica's most enduring and heartbreaking love story culminated. Legend has it two slave lovers, Tunkey and Mizzy, met here to carry out their suicide pact. They had fallen deeply in love but were separated by their master who sent them to work in different plantations. Unable to cope with separation, they arranged to escape one full moon. Meeting at this lofty spot, they jumped off the cliffs hand in hand so that they could spend eternity together in heaven. ***Southfield, east of Treasure Beach. ☎ 876-965-6577. Daily 9am–9pm. $3.***

5 **Dinner at Strawberry Hill (Blue Mountains).** High above Kingston, this exclusive mountainside restaurant has played host to such celebrity guests as Grace Jones, Kate Moss, Mick Jagger, Naomi Campbell, and Sting. Dinner is served on a wrap-around white, wooden verandah. An early sitting is advisable as this is the place to watch the sunset over the Blue Mountains. Then, at dusk, watch the lights of Kingston sparkle into life, like fairy lights stretching from its suburbs to the harbor. ***See p 54.***

The dining room at Strawberry Hill.

4 The Great **Outdoors**

Best **Beaches**

- Bloody Bay 2
- Bluefields Beach 4
- Boston Beach 10
- Calabash Bay 6
- Doctor's Cave Beach 3
- Frenchman's Bay 5
- Frenchman's Cove 9
- Jack's Bay Beach 8
- Long Bay 1
- Mahogany Beach 7
- Winnifred Beach 11

Previous page: Winnifred Beach.

You'll be following in the footprints of celebrities including JFK, Jackie Onassis, Will Smith, and Jada Pinkett-Smith on Jamaica's sands. Whether you're looking for a secluded romantic spot; a playful, party atmosphere with watersports; a quintessential Caribbean strand with swaying palm trees; or a beach where your kids can play alongside local families, there is a slice of shoreline to suit.

Montego Bay Region

★★ Doctor's Cave Beach (Montego Bay). Doctor's Cave Beach is so visually stunning that you could be forgiven for thinking it had been air-brushed. Palm trees dot the pure-white sand and primary-colored parasols set off the deep blue of the ocean. The waters here were once thought to have curative properties and it has been a bathing club since 1906. There is an air of exclusivity about Doctor's Cave Beach, even though for a small fee anyone can go through the white trellis entrance. Come early to enjoy a moment of sheer bliss before the crowds arrive. It can get busy and noisy and, as the day progresses, the party atmosphere intensifies. There are changing rooms, showers, an open-air restaurant, and a lifeguard on duty for most of the day. ***Gloucester Avenue. Admission: adults $5, children $2.50. Daily 9am–5pm.***

Negril Region

★ kids Bloody Bay (Negril). Bloody Bay is picture-postcard perfect—a horseshoe of yellow sand, lapped by crystal-clear waters that generally resemble a mill pond. The quieter of Negril's two largest beaches, it is so-named because whalers used to carve up their catch in its protected harbor. They would discard the innards into the sea, turning the water red. Nowadays, the southern and northern ends of the beach are shared out between the all-inclusive hotels that occupy the waterfront. In between, there is a public section where non-hotel residents are free to bathe. It's a favorite spot for beach cricket and food stalls serve up grilled fish for lunch. ***North of Long Bay just beyond the Breezes Grand Negril Resort and Spa (see p 141).***

★ kids Bluefields Beach (Bluefields, Westmoreland). This natural paradise is popular with

Doctor's Cave Beach.

Jamaican families and frequented by marine birds—but few tourists have yet discovered its charms. Its sheltered, crescent-shaped bay is lapped by calm, milky-blue waters, backed by forest, and affords arresting views of the coastline. Steps lead down to the beach and across from them, in a clearing, you will find restrooms and a collection of food and merchandise stalls. It is busy at weekends and during public holidays, but blissfully quiet at other times. ***East of Savanna-la-Mar and west of Black River on the A2.***

★★ Long Bay (Negril). The ultimate beach in Jamaica—an 11km (7 mile) stretch of fluffy, white sand that leads to shallow, perpetually warm turquoise waters. Your every seaside wish can be granted along this arc of sand. Watersports vendors offer everything from inflatable banana boat rides to jet ski hire, and this is also the place to book a sunset catamaran cruise or go diving (see p 83). The lilt of reggae music drifts from the beach bars, injecting an irrepressible, upbeat atmosphere

Watersports from banana boating to jet skiing are available at Long Bay.

Bloody Bay.

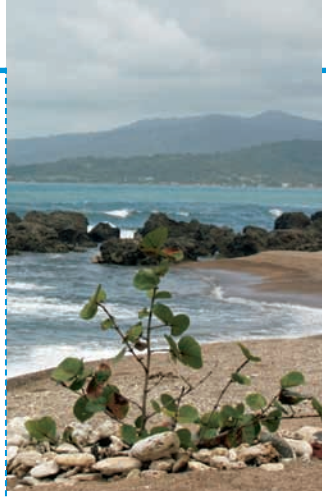
that can't fail to get you in the holiday mood. The large all-inclusive hotels that line much of Long Bay each command their own stretch of territory for the exclusive use of their guests. Smaller properties will be happy to afford you a sun-lounger—often without charge—if you purchase lunch or a beverage from their restaurant. Peddlers selling cigarettes, T-shirts, and souvenirs ply the beach throughout the day, but are generally polite and laid-back. They quickly get to know familiar faces and, after you have refused their merchandise once, they tend not to bother you again. Those offering jet ski hire are often a little more pushy. ***The bay stretches from Negril town center to the peninsula opposite Bobby Cay, Negril's offshore island.***

Ocho Rios Region

Jack's Bay Beach (Robin's Bay). This small cove is part of the Green Castle Estate (see p 70). The sand isn't typically Caribbean white, but has a powder-gray appearance, mixed with shingle. However, the water is crystal clear and is shallow at the shore, making it safe for children to paddle. Eye-catching pieces of bleached

driftwood stand by the water's edge. The picnic tables and sunshades fashioned from bamboo that stand beside seagrape trees make it an ideal picnic venue. There is also a restroom, a relaxed bar where locals play dominoes, and a small kitchen that serves steamed and fried fish with vegetables. It's worth phoning your order ahead if you are planning on having lunch, as the food is good and can run out on busy days. ***Follow the North Coast Highway in the direction of Annotto Bay. To the west of the town, turn off at the sign for Robin's Bay and Green Castle Estate. ☎ 876-394-4982. Admission: adults $3, children $1. Daily 9am–5pm.***

Mahogany Beach (Ocho Rios). Friendly, fun, and frequently rowdy, this town beach edging out between shops, bars, and restaurants always seems to be buzzing. The sound of jet skis, conversation, laughter, and thudding music merge to create a party atmosphere. ***Just beyond Bibibips restaurant, on the left as you head east out of Ocho Rios.***



Jack's Bay Beach is part of the Green Castle Estate.

Port Antonio Region

Boston Beach (Port Antonio). This shock of electric-blue water and coral-white sand is a good place to hang out with friends and enjoy a cool Red Stripe while sampling fiery, freshly-barbecued jerk pork from Jamaica's most famous jerk stands (see p 51), which are just a stroll away from this public beach. The rolling swells at this small bay are perfect for surfers. A group of strapping Jamaican guys, working out of a wooden shack, offer surf lessons and hire out boards. ***18km (11 miles) east of Port Antonio on the A4.***

Surf board hire and lessons are available at Boston Bay.

Boat trips to the Blue Lagoon can be organized from Winnifred Beach.

★★★ Frenchman's Cove (Port Antonio). Frenchman's Cove is straight out of a James Bond movie and one gets the feeling that Ursula Andress could rise out of the water at any moment. A cold water stream runs through a copse of trees to this cove of aquamarine waters. Silky-soft sand slopes gently into the sea at first, then shelves more steeply. This gem of a beach is almost hidden—set back from the road and enclosed by verdant cliffs. There are restrooms and a little beach cafe, which sells drinks and offers lunch most days. ***Head east on the A4 from Port Antonio for 8km (5 miles) to the district of Drapers. Then look out for the Frenchman's Cove sign on your left. Continue on the driveway to the entrance. Admission $5. Daily 9am–5pm.***

★★ kids Winnifred Beach (Port Antonio). A pot-holed road through a neat housing estate takes you to this lively and friendly public beach. Families, couples, and friends alike come here to bathe, play ball games, take their lunch break, or simply unwind after work. The water is clean and clear and the golden sand stretches between rock stacks. Trees line the beach so there is plenty of shade and a reef just offshore makes this a good snorkeling spot. A handful of snack bars ensure refreshments are available throughout the day and several craft stalls sell bracelets, shells, and carvings at reasonable prices. You can also take a boat trip to the Blue Lagoon (see p 104) from here. Ask at Cynthia's beach cafe (see p 138) at the western end of the sand. They will call one of the local fishermen who will then pick you up from the far end of the beach. Expect to pay $100 for a three-hour trip. ***16km (10 miles) east of Port Antonio on the A4, turn left at the sign, the beach is 1.5km (1 mile) from the main road. Map p 58.***

Calabash Bay.

Frenchman's Bay.

Treasure Beach Region

★ Calabash Bay (Treasure Beach). My personal favorite is the perfect place to escape the crowds and a prime spot to watch the sunset. A fleet of fishing boats stands at one end of this small cove and, at the other end, a bed of rocks appears and then disappears with the ebb and flow of the tide, making them great for rock-pooling. The beach is backed by a handful of pretty villas and beach houses; their floral gardens adding a splash of color to the scene. Pods of dolphins are occasionally seen offshore from here and, more frequently, herons swoop to make their daily catch. As with all the beaches on this stretch of the south coast, swimming can be dangerous at times. It is advisable to check locally if it is safe to take a dip before you hit the water. Unlike the calmer waters of the north coast, the waves that break here are big enough for body surfing. There are, however, no facilities and no shade. The nearest are a 10-minute walk away at Sunset Resort (see p 154). ***At the junction by the blue BRED's Office and Internet Cafe, a local landmark, follow the coast road round to the right. Then take the first track on your left. This leads to the beach.***

Travel Tip

Don't underestimate the strength of the sun at any time of the year. Jamaica's coastline is often blessed with a soft, cool breeze that can lure you into staying out of the shade for longer than is safe. Be certain to use a high-factor tanning lotion and don't be tempted to sunbathe in the middle of the day, no matter how temperate it feels.

Frenchman's Bay (Treasure Beach). This long swathe of beach has a desert-island feel about it and is perfect for those who like a sleepy, laid-back beach experience. You'll likely get it almost, if not completely, to yourself. It counts among the best beaches in the area known as Treasure Beach (see p 112) on the south coast, a resort with a hippy, shabby-chic vibe. Undertows and strong currents can make swimming dangerous at times, so always check with local residents before you take a dip. There are a scattering of beach cafes along the sand and restaurants at the eastern end of the beach. ***1.6km (1 mile) west of Jake's (see p 153).***

Best **Soft Adventure**

- Blue Mountain Bicycle Tours 9
- Blue Mountain Peak 11
- Braco Stables 5
- Cockpit Country 4
- Cranbrook Flower Forest 6
- Holywell Recreational Park 10
- Mystic Mountain 7
- Prospect Plantation 8
- Reliable Adventures Jamaica 2
- Rhodes Hall Plantation 1
- YS Falls 3

Jamaica offers countless activities for the intrepid and adventurous. While you may not get to risk life and limb on white-water rapids or by scaling snow-capped peaks, there are plenty of less hazardous but equally exhilarating experiences. The island's rainforests, mountains, plains, and rivers offer a variety of ways to get an adrenalin rush, as well as the more traditional outdoor pursuits.

Horse Riding

The changing landscape of Jamaica's north coast is arguably best appreciated from the saddle. The shallow blue waters that almost immediately meet green hillsides and sprawling plantations can all be seen in a morning's ride. A shorter ride, on the other hand, can take you and your horse along a sandy beach, and end with you both taking a cooling swim in the sea. Stables cater for experienced riders and beginners; adults and children.

Braco Stables. Close to the Breezes Rio Bueno Resort (see p 125) in Montego Bay, these stables are open daily and offer two-hour rides at 10.30am and 2.30pm from $60 per person and for children over 5. ☎ *876-954-8105. www.bracostables.com.*

Prospect Plantation. 5km (3 miles) east of Ocho Rios, you can take a three-hour ride across this working plantation. The estate dates back to 1721 and has trees within its grounds planted by Sir Winston Churchill, Noel Coward, and Ian Fleming. ***Rides cost $70 per person from Mon to Sat. ☎ 876-994-1085. www.prospectplantationtours.com.***

★ **Rhodes Hall Plantation.** 8km (5 miles) east of Negril at Orange Bay, these stables offer rides across their 220-hectare (550-acre) estate and private beachfront in small groups from $60 per person daily. ☎ *876-957-6422. www.jamplified.com/riding.*

Horse riding along the beachfront from Rhodes Hall Plantation.

Chukka Caribbean Adventures

This award-winning tour company, is now the leading provider of adventure activities in Jamaica. They have a vast range of tours from ATV (All Terrain Vehicle) safaris and river-tubing to dune-buggy-driving and even dog-sledding. Trips can be booked online in advance or at your hotel tour desk while in resort. Prices range from $30–$130 per person and include transfers to and from your resort hotel. A group of young, energetic tour guides stay with you throughout your adventure and encourage you to say 'Yeah, Mon' and 'Irie' (colloquial Jamaican expression for 'that's great') at every turn to show you are having a good time. www.chukkacaribbean.com.

Cycling

Cycling along the busy coastal highway or in resort can be far from a relaxing experience. However, the quieter roads that wrap themselves around the Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park are prime cycling territory and are very satisfying to ride. All the accommodations listed in the 'Kingston & Blue Mountains' section of Chapter 6 (see p 146) will arrange bicycle hire if you prefer to explore independently, rather than as part of an organized group. If you seek a less strenuous day out, sign up for a downhill bike ride with **Blue Mountain Bicycle Tours**. You'll be collected from your hotel, driven to an elevated starting point and, from there, you can freewheel downhill. Head through the misty hillsides past shops and hamlets in your own time, stopping to take photos along the way. The ride ends at a waterfall so remember to put your swimwear in your backpack for a quick dip before returning to your resort. The experience costs from $93 per person including transfers from Montego Bay, Kingston, Port Antonio, and Ocho Rios hotels. ☎ *876-974-7075. www.bmtoursja.com.*

Hiking

There are plenty of opportunities to explore the interior on foot for walkers of all fitness levels. Taking a guide along with you is always recommended, as routes are rarely waymarked and maps are not always updated regularly.

★★★ **Blue Mountain Peak.** The toughest and most rewarding climb in Jamaica. A well-trodden trail from Hagley Gap takes you to the island's highest point 2,256 meters (7,401 ft) above sea level. Making it to the top is considered quite an achievement. Sturdy boots and waterproofs are essential. *See p 110.*

Travel Tip

Tour operators insist you sign a liability waiver form before taking part in any of their tours. Make sure you have adequate personal and travel insurance cover before signing on the dotted line. It is also wise to check at the time of booking what type of clothing and footwear would be suitable for your activity and if water is provided.

Cockpit Country. A vast uncharted region at the center of the island, offering some of the most dramatic hiking in the Caribbean. A mass of tangled greenery grows relentlessly amidst a pot-holed plateau of porous limestone here. It's foolhardy not to take a guide as it is easy to get lost, and only those with local knowledge know how to avoid the naturally-formed potholes which are hidden by the foliage. Historically, this impenetrable region was home to the Maroons, a group of people of Ghanaian descent who, refusing to be enslaved, escaped from the British colonialists. **Cockpit Country Adventure Tours** run a range of day and half-day hikes from their base in Albert Town, Trelawny from $55 per person. ☎ *876-610-0818. www.stea.net/ccat.htm.*

★ Holywell Recreational Park. Just north of Newcastle in the Blue Mountains, this woodland setting has a series of trails of varying difficulty, from easy to strenuous. Hikers have a good chance of seeing wild orchids, rare birds, and Giant Swallowtail butterflies (see p 111). ☎ *876-920-8278. www.greenjamaica.org.jm.*

Reliable Adventures Jamaica. This small community tour company, based near Bluefields, arranges hikes into the hills and through the villages of the less touristic and largely unspoilt south coast, a haven for birdlife. *Belmont Fishing Beach, Belmont, Bluefields.* ☎ *876-955-8834 or* ☎ *876-421-7449. www.reliableadventuresjamaica.com/index.htm.*

Glide over YS Falls on a canopy tour.

Zip-wiring

This is the latest craze in soft adventure, and its popularity continues to grow. Also known as a canopy tour, you can experience this downhill glide, via cable and pulley, against a selection of scenic backdrops. Fly over a garden gorge at **Cranbrook Flower Forest** (see p 74) with Chukka Caribbean Adventures (see sidebar below); through rainforest at **Mystic Mountain** (see p 100); or over a waterfall at **★ YS Falls** (see p 114).

Hummingbird, Cranbrook Flower Forest.

Best Birding

Bird-watching is a bigger draw for some visitors than the beaches. There are 28 endemic species on the island—an extraordinary number given the island's size—largely due to Jamaica's biodiversity and isolation. The list of recorded species totals around 300—including the migratory birds that winter here, many from North America. Explore the forested and less-developed corners of the country and it is easy to see a large number of them.

Tip

Ensuring you see all 28 endemic species during your stay may require a modicum of patience, some traveling, and painstaking planning. However, you will doubtless see many breeds without making any effort at all. Virtually any location with flowers attracts birds morning and afternoon, so from your hotel's breakfast terrace to the vegetation around the airports, make sure you have your camera at the ready.

★★★ Blue & John Crow Mountains. The mid- and high-level forests of Jamaica's largest mountain range count among the most atmospheric settings to see many of the island's endemic species. Specialist mountain birding guides can be arranged locally through your chosen accommodation. Lime Tree Farm (see p 148), in particular, specializes in bird-watching excursions in these misty heights. Rufous-tailed Flycatcher, Jamaican Becard, Blue Mountain Vireo, and Jamaican Spindalis are often to be seen and, of course, the 'John Crow' (Turkey Vulture) which looks graceful in flight but very unattractive on the ground. In the winter months, migrant birds include American Redstart, Prairie Warbler, and Black-throated Blue Warbler. *Map p 68.*

Bluefields. The Victorian naturalist Philip Henry Gosse first noted the ornithological importance of this region in the mid-1800s. Twenty-two of the 28 endemic species, plus a further 13 endemic subspecies, can be observed here, in the thickly forested hills that rise sharply from the sea, just over an hour's drive south-east from Negril. The **Jamaica Birding** company leads full and half-day tours through this sleepy part of the south coast from $70 per person. Regular sightings include Jamaican Tody, Orangequit, Rufous-throated Solitaire, Jamaican Mango (a hummingbird), and Jamaican Woodpecker. ☎ *876-955-8834. www.jamaicabirding.com. Map p 68.*

★ **Cockpit Country.** The valleys and limestone bluffs of this rugged wilderness (see p 67) are home to

See Jamaican Todys on a tour of Bluefields.

Hotel Mockingbird Hill

The proprietors of this small, eco hotel in Port Antonio are specialists in birding tours. Together with expert birding guides, they have developed two itineraries that take clients island-wide with the aim of seeing all 28 endemic species. The 10-day and week-long tours include transport, accommodation, some meals, and guiding. One tour is created with avid bird-watchers in mind; the other for those whose partners or family members do not share their ornithological passion. This combines some general sightseeing with bird-watching. Bespoke birding days in the Blue and John Crow Mountains can also be arranged. Trips begin and end at the hotel, which itself has a seven-acre garden where the endangered Ring-tailed Pigeon and Black-billed Streamertail are regular visitors. (See p 137).

27 of the 28 endemic species. The Black-billed Streamertail is the only species not found here. Yellow and Black-billed parrots, Sad Flycatcher, and Vervain Hummingbird—the second smallest species of hummingbird in the world—are frequently seen. Cockpit Country starts around 20km (12.5 miles) inland from Falmouth, and is best accessed from Albert Town. Respected ornithologist **John Fletcher**, president of the **Bird Life Jamaica** society**,** can arrange guiding. ☎ ***876-927-8257. coffee@kasnet.com. Map p 68.***

Birdwatching begins in the Mockingbird Hill hotel garden.

Cranbrook Flower Forest. It is possible to request early admission to see the hummingbirds that descend daily to this serene garden before general visitors arrive. ***North Coast Highway, 6.5km (4 miles) east of Runaway Bay. Map p 68.***

★ **Green Castle Estate.** Birders can arrange to roam freely across the walking trails and farm roads of this 640-hectare (1,600-acre) eco-estate in the north-east of the island. There are coconut groves, open grassland, forested hilltops, freshwater ponds, and mangroves in the grounds. The property's diverse habitats have attracted 120 species to date, 20 of them endemic. Guides who know the best time and places to spot the various species can be booked in advance. You'll typically see Jamaican Vireo, Jamaican Elaenia, Jamaican Tody, Jamaican Becard, warblers,

Green Castle bird watching terrain.

woodpeckers, doves, and cuckoos. Jamaican Owls and Northern Potoos are frequent night visitors too (see p 77). ***Robins Bay Road, Robins Bay,off the North Coast Highway between Ocho Rios and Port Antonio. ☎ 876-881-6293. www.gcjamaica.com. Unguided half-day adults $10, children $5; Unguided full-day adults $15 , children $7.50, children under 11 free; Guided half-day $30 per person; Guided full-day $50 per person. Daily by reservation. Map p 68.***

★★★ Marshall's Pen. Serious and seasoned birders with their own binoculars may visit this 100-acre- plus estate—the Holy Grail of Jamaican bird-watching—by prior arrangement only. It is home to ornithologist and conservationist Dr. Ann Haynes-Sutton, co-author of *A Photographic Guide to the Birds of Jamaica*. Visitors will be guided by Ann, or one of her groundsmen, through the gardens that are chock-full of tropical plants and flowers. Twenty-three of Jamaica's 28 native species have been spotted here including frequent sightings of Jamaican Owl. Call or e-mail ahead to make an appointment. ***Marshall's Pen, Mandeville. ☎ 876-904-5454 or ☎ 876-877-7335. Map p 68.***

★ Rocklands Bird Feeding Station. If you aren't a regular twitcher but would still like to see Jamaica's birdlife in close up with minimum effort, this family attraction draws an array of colorful species. Visitors are given a feeder bottle of sugar water to hold. Sit quietly and still in the terraced gardens and hummingbirds and orioles will, in time, perch on your hands and fingers to feed. The best time to visit is in the late afternoon. ***1.5hr. South of Montego Bay at Anchovy. ☎ 876-952-2009. Admission: adults $15, children 2–8 yrs $5. Daily 9am–5pm. Map p 68.***

Royal Palm Reserve. Migrating birds, together with the rare and endangered West Indian Whistling Duck, can be spotted at this wetland center south of Negril. You may also see Jamaican Woodpeckers and Olive-throated Parakeets here (see p 121). ***Map p 68.***

Best Gardens

Christopher Columbus said Jamaica's flora was more valuable than gold. The 15th-century explorer may have been sent across the oceans to find precious metal, but it was the incredible abundance of natural beauty that he described as treasure to Queen Isabella upon his return to Spain. Thanks to the varied topography of mangrove wetland, cool mountains, a generally dry south coast, and a seasonally wet north coast, tropical, subtropical, and temperate plants all thrive here. Of the 3,000 species of flowering plants that grow, over a quarter are endemic. This includes some 60 varieties of fern and around 60 species of orchid. Gardens across the island showcase this horticultural splendor.

★ Castleton Botanical Gardens (Blue Mountains). Stocked from the Kew Royal Botanic Gardens in London from 1897, the number of plant species kept here reached 4,000 in the garden's heyday. It was best-known for the 180 species of palm that once grew side by side. Twenty-five species still remain. Century, Dormant, Raffia, and Pinanga are among them. Chinese guinep, African velvet apple, West Indian mahogany, and strychnos trees also share the sunlight. Rising into the hills and with the Wag Water River running through it, this is an undeniably peaceful spot. Guides looking for a small fee are on hand at the entrance to fast-track you to the highlights and best vistas. The gardens have been neglected in recent years but work is visibly underway to restore them to their former glory. *3hr. Castleton, St Mary on the A3 between Kingston and Annotto Bay. 876-927-1731. Admission free. Daily 8am–6pm. Map p 72.*

★★ Cinchona Botanical Gardens (Blue Mountains). Established in the mid-19th century and named after the trees that were initially planted there for commercial reasons: their bark was used to produce quinine to treat malaria. However, the project didn't prove cost effective and Cinchona was turned into a pleasure garden, with the English head gardener importing a diverse and popular array of species from London's Kew Gardens. Today, lilies and orchids as well as cork, camphor, eucalyptus, cedar, and

Cinchona Botanical Gardens.

The entrance to the Cranbrook Flower Forest.

yucca trees remain. Only reachable on foot or by 4x4, this remote, mountain-top garden is atmospheric and spectacular. One of the hard-working gardeners, who constantly strive to protect the grounds being overwhelmed by the encroaching bush, may have time to take you on a guided tour. A small tip is greatly appreciated. 🕘 *3hr. Nr Clydesdale, Blue Mountains. Daily during daylight hours. Admission free.*

Coyaba Gardens (Ocho Rios). A series of pathways lead through this water garden, dotted with fountains and designed around pools fed by a stream. Densely-planted beds of exotic blooms including heliconia, ginger lilies, and allamanda are complemented by travelers' palms, giant banyan, and cedar trees. 🕘 *2hr. Ocho Rios, take the A3 towards Fern Gully turning right at the sign for Shaw Park. ☎ 876-974-6235. Admission: adults $10, children under 12 $5. Daily 8am–5pm. Map p 72.*

★★ kids **Cranbrook Flower Forest (Runaway Bay).** It's hard to believe that owner Ivan Linton created this verdant paradise from a parcel of land littered with rocks and rubble and devoid of top soil. He replaced the top soil, propagated virtually every plant and, over the last 30 years, has lovingly maintained this 40-acre landscaped garden which opened to the public in 1997. An avenue of Royal Palms creates a stunning entry to the garden, which comprises a patchwork of sweeping lawns, rainforest, and a bamboo walk where Chinese bamboo and feather-leaf palms converge. A pathway by the stream reveals a tropical bouquet, including bromeliads, philodendron, bird of paradise, ixora, hibiscus, red euphorbia, orchids, and red, pink, and peach torch ginger. 🕘 *3hr. North Coast Highway, 6.5km (4 miles) east of Runaway Bay. ☎ 876-610-6509 or ☎ 876-770-8071. www.cranbrookff.com. Admission: adults $10, children under 12 $5. Daily 9am–5pm except Good Friday and Christmas Day. Map p 72.*

★ **Hope Royal Botanical Gardens (Kingston).** Founded in the late 1800s these are the largest and second oldest botanical gardens in the West Indies. They are planted on part of the former estate of Major Richard Hope, one of the English officers who helped claim Jamaica from the Spanish in 1655. After Queen Elizabeth visited the

gardens in 1953 they were renamed Hope Royal Botanical Gardens. This formal garden with its manicured lawns, shady pergolas, and ornamental ponds has a cactus garden, an avenue of bougainvillea, and flower beds blending texture and color. An oasis in the heart of the city, Hope is planted with a rich variety of exotic and endemic species, myriad trees and palms, including the sago and Talipot, as well as the striking Kassod. 🕘 *2hr. Old Hope Road.* ☎ *876-927-1085. Admission free. Daily 6am–6pm. Map p 72.*

★ **Mrs Stephenson's Garden (Mandeville).** The delightful owner's celebrated and prize-winning collection of orchids includes more than 300 varieties grown in a clutch of shade houses adjoining her home. Her garden, which boasts a dazzling array of plants from agapanthus to anthuriums, has also won many awards from the prestigious Mandeville Horticultural Society. As well as maintaining her garden, Carmen Stephenson also uses it to stock her flower shop. She welcomes visits from avid gardeners by appointment only. 🕘 *1hr. Mandeville.* ☎ *876-488-7207. Admission $5.*

Hope Royal Botanical Gardens.

Avid gardeners should phone ahead to visit Mrs Stephenson's garden.

Travel Tip

Jamaica's floral bounty isn't confined to her official gardens. It's irrepressible. You will see it bursting forth in front yards and at the roadside from the mountains to the coast. Hotel gardens can be full of horticultural surprises, too. Couples Swept Away in Negril (see p 142); Strawberry Hill (see p 149) in the Blue Mountains; the Ritz Carlton (see p 127) in Montego Bay; and Jamaica Inn (see p 132) in Ocho Rios all have noteworthy gardens. At the latter two properties, guests can join a formal tour led by one of the groundsmen. Keen gardeners may also do so, but call ahead first.

Best **Off-the-Beaten-Track**

The island's lesser-known attractions can be among the most rewarding to visit. Traveling to them may take more time and effort than on the well-trod tourist trail, but you'll have the satisfaction of losing the crowds and experiencing a slice of 'roots' Jamaica. Some of the more fledgling attractions can be a little rough around the edges, with no fancy gift shops or well-versed tour guides. What you can expect, however, is a warm welcome and a greater chance of meeting everyday Jamaican families at leisure. Some also offer a unique insight into aspects of Jamaica that contrast starkly with the stereotypical images associated with this Caribbean nation.

North-East Region

Asafu Yard & Museum. To find out about Jamaica's early history, this fascinating community museum recounts the little-known story of the Maroons. These Moorish Africans were tradesmen who came to Jamaica at the time of slavery. Refusing to be enslaved they fled to the bush, set up home and enjoyed freedom until a treaty with the British enabled them to establish a settlement here in Charles Town. Performances, cookery demonstrations, and other events showcasing Moorish culture are regularly held in the museum's yard throughout the year. *2hr. Charles Town, nr Buff Bay, Port Antonio. ☎ 876-445-2861 or ☎ 876-365-6524. Admission free, but donations welcomed. Call ahead for opening times and events program. Map p 76.*

★★ kids **Green Castle Estate Eco Tour.** This 1,600-acre plantation is steeped in history. Archaeological finds suggest it was a Taino settlement around A.D. 900. It was later inhabited by Spanish colonialists in the 1600s. They left a sturdy coral-stone windmill as a legacy. Then came the British, and the cash crop at Green Castle changed from pimento to cacao, and then from sugar to bananas. Today the focus is on coconuts and orchids. The tour starts with a seasonal juice or coconut water beneath a shady gazebo. Ms Dolly, the charismatic tour guide, then shares her love and knowledge of the estate, serenading you with century-old folk songs about life, farming, and going to market, before taking you to see the organic coconut oil factory, the windmill, and Blue Hole—a natural basin of turquoise water carved out by the sea. The final stop is the orchid houses where several species, and hundreds of blooms in various stages of growth, create a colorful spectacle of pink, purple, and white

Tour the organic coconut oil factory at the Green Castle Estate.

Wander the exotic plants and fruit orchards at St. Mary Peace Park & Farm.

(see p 20). ***Off the North Coast Highway between Port Antonio and Ocho Rios. Admission: adults $20, children 5–11 $10, Under 5s free. AE, MC, V. Mon–Fri by reservation. Map p 76.***

★★ kids St. Mary Peace Park & Farm. This 9-hectare (22-acre) park, in the heart of a typical rural community, is a natural haven just 15 minutes from Ocho Rios. Here you will have the chance to see, feel, touch, and eat a range of unusual exotic fruits that thrive in Jamaica but are rarely seen at hotel buffet tables. Pick yourself a June plum or a sweet and fleshy etioti apple from the orchard, or try some ready sliced for visitors at the tasting table. There are hammocks tied between trees to stretch out on; a children's play area; a flower walk that takes you through a sea of tall ginger lilies; and a river walk where you can paddle in a stream to cool off. I thoroughly recommend the barbecue picnic lunch, which can be booked in advance. 🕘 ***3hr. Take the North Coast Highway to Oracabessa, turning here at the sign for Jack's River and Roslyn Pen and heading inland. ☎ 876-588-9344. Admission: adults $10, children under 12 $7. Daily 9am–5pm. Map p 76.***

South-West Region

★ Blue Hole. This attraction is less than an hour's drive from Negril, although surprisingly few people have yet discovered it. Head south until Petersfield, turning off at the sign for Roaring River. You'll pass through cane fields and a hamlet of houses where a pot-holed road takes you to an uninspiring entrance. Inside, though, is a veritable Garden of Eden. A wild and unruly mass of ginger lilies, ferns, and palms encircles a private pool of shockingly bright-blue water that's invigoratingly cool to swim in. A river runs around the garden. Local boys gladly offer their services (for a small fee of around $5) as guides for a bare-foot walk along its bank and a wade through its bed, which is strewn with moss-covered boulders. Don't be deterred if the

The shockingly brigh water at the Blue Hole.

Enjoy the party atmosphere at Bubbling Springs.

gates are locked when you arrive. One of the villagers will go and fetch the key holder. 🕘 *2hr.* ☎ *876-401-5312. Admission: adults $15, children under 12 $10. Daily 9am–dusk. Map p 76.*

kids **Bubbling Springs.** There is a party atmosphere within the confines of Bubbling Springs's rainbow-painted walls. A mineral bath tapped from an underground spring provides a pool of soothing water to bathe in. The high mineral content is said to ease aches and pains. Rubber rings fashioned from old tractor-tire inner-tubes are used to float in. A DJ plays pool-side, and there is also a bar and a cafe that serves home-cooked Jamaican food. A mini go-kart track has also been added to the attraction. 🕘 *2hr. Point Hill, Middle Quarters.* ☎ *876-850-1606 or* ☎ *876-571-3040. Admission: adults $7, children 2–11 $5. Daily 8am–6pm. Map p 76.*

South-East Region

★ **Hellshire Beach.** Across the bay from Kingston, south-west of Portmore, this shabby-chic hangout is a favored picnic spot with Kingston's white-collar workers. Join them and their families here at weekends. This is the place to go to read the Sunday papers and feast on fried and barbecued shellfish cooked by beach vendors in ramshackle corrugated-iron and palm-thatched shacks. 🕘 *3hr. Follow signs for the toll road from Kingston towards Mandeville, turning off at Portmore. Map p 76.*

Middle Quarters. If you drive through this village (which you invariably will en route to YS Falls, the Appleton Factory, or Bamboo Avenue from any of the main resorts), you will see groups of fish-wives standing at the roadside. They offer for sale clear plastic bags of pepper shrimp which they hold up for inspection with outstretched hands. The shrimp is actually a type of crayfish caught in bamboo cages in the Black River. It is finger-licking delicious and extremely moreish. To be on the safe side, stop at one of the road-side shacks where you can see the shrimp being freshly cooked and make sure your helping is piping hot before you crack open the hardy shells. *Map p 76.*

Sporting **Jamaica**

The island's balmy climate is certainly sport friendly and the coastline is awash with watersports vendors. There is a wide range of sports available, including some activities you might not expect. In recent years, the country's athletes have inspired a flurry of running events, and some elite and niche sports have a firm following, too.

Cricket

Sabina Park. This stadium is the main arena for Jamaica's favorite pastime. Domestic, regional, and international matches are held here and foster what can only be described as a party atmosphere—in particular when the West Indies meet England. ***Sabina Park, South Camp Road, Kingston. ☎ 876-922-8423 or ☎ 876-967-0322. www.cricketjamaica.org.***

Diving

The generally clear, warm waters of the north coast have numerous interesting sites for beginners and advanced divers to explore. Many of the all-inclusive hotels also include scuba-diving in their packages for certified divers and PADI courses for the non-certified. There are plenty of dive shops operating in each of the major resorts, many based at the major hotels. It's advisable to ensure the one you choose is a member of PADI (Professional Association of Diving Instructors), the benchmark of professional diving standards.

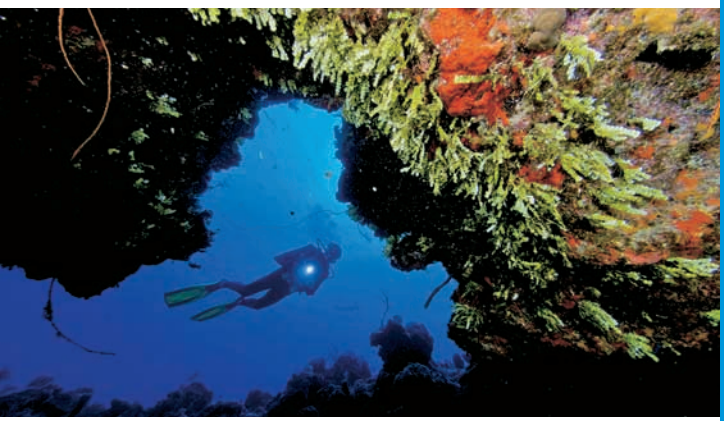
Best Dive Sites

Airport Reef (Montego Bay). A shallow finger reef with coral caverns, tunnels, and crevasses.

Alligator Head (Port Antonio). A wall dive for advanced divers, this long reef has a coral floor that plunges 48m (160 ft). Sea fans and flower coral harbor snapper, grouper, and jacks.

Deep Plane Wreck (Negril). A deliberately sunk Cessna light aircraft lies 30m (100 ft) beneath the depths of Bloody Bay. It attracts barracuda, triggerfish, and sometimes turtles.

There are numerous underwater sites on the north coast to explore.



Many watersports are offered at Long Bay, Negril.

The Throne Room (Negril). A 12m (40 ft) wide cave entered through a crack in the reef that is covered in yellow sea sponges and coral.

The Wreck of the Kathryn (Ocho Rios). Swim through the interior of an intact Canadian mine sweeper sunk in 1991 to create an artificial reef.

Horse Racing

Caymanas Track. The country's only horse-racing track holds regular meetings. View the action from the air-conditioned North Lounge or alongside the cheering crowd trackside. This is an exciting and different way to mingle with Jamaicans. ***Gregory Park, Portmore, Kingston. ☎ 876-988-2523. www.caymanasracetrack.com. Wed, Sat and public holidays noon–6pm. $3.***

Polo

Introduced to Jamaica by the British army in 1882 the game has endured and thrived. The field at the St Ann Polo Club is among the oldest in the world, established in 1905. It is one of three clubs on the island supported by a small group of dedicated amateur players. Between them they host visiting teams and put on exhibition matches. It is also possible to rent a horse and take a lesson or take part in a tournament. The season runs from January to early August, and the St Ann Polo Club holds regular Saturday matches, with afternoon tea a traditional part of the proceedings. ***Kingston Polo Club, St. Lucia Avenue, Kingston. ☎ 876-926-9182. St Ann Polo Club, Drax Hall. ☎ 876-381-4660. Chukka Blue Polo Club, North Coast Highway Hanover. ☎ 876-382-7701.***

Running

Jake's Off-Road Triathlon (Treasure Beach). A 500m (546 yd) ocean swim, 25km (15.5 mile) mountain bike ride, and a 7km (4.3 mile) country run combine to make a heart-pounding tour of the less touristy south coast. Attended by international athletes, tourists, and locals alike, there is a great sense of camaraderie as well as competitiveness. Proceeds from the event, which is held each April, are used to fund the Treasure Beach community

charity BREDS. The event starts at Treasure Beach. ☎ *876-965-3000. www.jakesoffroadtri.com.*

Reggae Marathon (Negril). Held in the cooler month of December, the course for this marathon is mainly flat and follows the shady coast road behind Long Bay beach from the center of Negril out to the town of Green Island. The organizers of this open event also host a half-marathon and a 10km (6 mile) run. ☎ *876-922-8677 or* ☎ *876-922-8673. www.reggaemarathon.com.*

Snorkeling

Equipment is available at most hotels and many beach bars. The area around Negril's West End cliffs and just offshore at Doctor's Cave Beach are among the best spots to try.

Tennis

Most all-inclusive hotels have courts and tennis pros on site. Properties tend to cater for the majority of their guests—casual players who pick up a racket when on vacation. Those who play regularly, and would look to improve their game while away, might consider paying for day membership or staying at **Couples Swept Away** in Negril (see p 142), or **Half Moon** in Montego Bay (see p 127). The former resort holds regular tournaments and round-robin competitions on the 10 floodlit hard and clay courts. There is also complimentary coaching for those staying at the resort. The latter property has 13 all-weather courts lit for night play and the tennis center holds clinics, private lessons, and summer camps.

Watersports

Negril's Long Bay and Bloody Bay lend themselves to parasailing and water-skiing and you'll find vendors dotted along their expanse. Jet skis, windsurfing, and game fishing trips are readily available at Ocho Rios, Montego Bay, and Negril. Surfers should head east to Boston Bay (see p 61), where the waves are more substantial. The majority of beachfront hotels offer watersports (and non-motorized watersports are usually free for guests).

National Heroes

Jamaica is home to Usain 'Lightning' Bolt, the man who proved himself to be the fastest man on Earth at the 2008 Beijing Olympics and has gone on to impress the crowds and amass more accolades at the athletics events he has attended since. When Bolt races, the nation grinds to a halt as everyone gathers around TV screens in bars and restaurants to cheer him on. The very mention of his name has his countrymen and women brimming with pride. He and his talented medal-hauling contemporaries, including Shelly-Ann Fraser and Veronica Campbell-Brown, have become national heroes. There are athletics development programs in Jamaican schools and many of the nation's youngsters aspire to follow in Bolt's wake. You may even get to run alongside them at one of the country's open running events.

Best **Golfing**

Jamaica's golf courses have the power to turn beginners into addicts and to beguile and enthrall scratch golfers. Many follow the rise and fall of the tropical landscape and hug the curve of the coastline. If you intend to play more than a round or two, consider making Montego Bay your base. The golfing capital of Jamaica, it boasts the most and some of the best courses on the island.

Tips

Golf clubs are available to hire at all courses on the island, so you can leave yours at home if you are just on vacation for the weekend or want to travel light. As a rule of thumb, the higher the green fees at the course you are playing, the better the quality and condition of clubs you will be able to hire. If you're a serious golfer intending to spend a chunk of your vacation on the fairways, it's worth knowing that some of the all-inclusive hotel groups, such as Couples, Breezes, and Sandals (see Chapter 6) offer unlimited golf at affiliated courses at no extra cost from some of their properties. If you have a partner who doesn't play, take them and their camera along for a golf cart ride at the White Witch or Cinnamon Hill Ocean courses and you could well have a convert on your hands by the time you reach the 19th hole.

Breezes Runaway Bay Resort & Golf Club (Runaway Bay). This 4,928m (5,389 yd) course is suitable for golfers of all skill levels, and is particularly easy on beginners. Across the street from the ocean, it has a traditional layout with long fairways, flat greens, and some interesting doglegs. Crosswinds can play havoc on the long par fours and fives, but that's part of the fun and the challenge. Often unfairly overlooked in favor of the more glamorous, big-name designer options in Montego Bay, this is both a pleasurable and satisfying course to play. ***On the North Coast Highway at Runaway Bay. ☎ 876-973-7319. www.superclubs.com/golf. 9 holes $50, 18 holes $80. AE, DC, MC, V.***

★★ Cinnamon Hill Ocean Course (Montego Bay). This course was designed by the same team of architects that created the White Witch course and is just as scenic; the front nine play right up

Breezes Runaway Resort & Golf Club.

to the water's edge, while the manicured fairways of the hilly back nine are in the thick of tropical foliage and exotic flowers. On course, there's also an aqueduct dating back to the colonial era, a waterfall that was the backdrop for a seduction scene in the James Bond movie, *Live and Let Die*, and Johnny Cash's former vacation home. The caddies won't need much prompting to share stories about the estate's history with you. They are also full of useful tips on how to get round in the least number of strokes. Cinnamon Hill is part of the Rose Hall Resort and Country Club. ***North Coast Highway, Montego Bay. ☎ 876-953-2984. www.rosehallresort.com. 18 holes: guests $119–$159, non-guests $129–$169. AE, DC, MC, V.***

Half Moon Golf Course (Montego Bay). A championship course that's enjoyable to play no matter what your level, thanks to the multiple tees. A Robert Trent Jones Senior creation, enhanced by the work of talented course architect Roger Rulewich in recent years, it has a lush layout and bunker-edged greens. The signature fourth hole reveals a fabulous view of the sea. It is also home to a David Leadbetter Golf Academy, making this a great setting to improve your game. This is also a very walkable course, so you can get a taste of what it feels like to be a pro as your caddy walks with you carrying your golf bag and recommending clubs. ***Rose Hall, North Coast Highway, Montego Bay. ☎ 876-953-2560. www.halfmoongolf.com. 18 holes: guests $55–$85, non-guests $70–$130. AE, DC, MC, V.***

Manchester Club (Mandeville). If you fancy playing a historic round, this is the oldest golf club in the Western hemisphere—established nearly 150 years ago. It doesn't have the flashy pro shops or the pristine greens of the north coast courses, but its nine holes are nevertheless well maintained. It also has the most modest green fees in Jamaica. For those who struggle to play in the heat, this is a good option too, as the lofty heights of Mandeville are considerably cooler than the coastal resorts. ***Brumilia Road, Mandeville. ☎ 876-962-2403. 9 holes $30. MC.***

★ **Negril Hills (Negril).** Surrounded by mountains and rugged countryside, this inland course is the only course within reasonable driving distance of Negril. It is suitable for improvers and above. As its name suggests you can tee off downhill and then work your way back uphill to the green. It is an interesting course that requires both stamina and patience—you're definitely set for a good work-out if you don't get a cart. ***To get there take the A2 from Negril towards***

The Manchester Club was established in Mandeville nearly 150 years ago.

Sea view from the White Witch course.

Sheffield for 4km (3 miles), then turn left at the sign for the golf club. ☎ *876-957-4638. 18 holes $58. MC, V.*

Sandals Golf & Country Club (Ocho Rios). An exciting course to play that is surprisingly difficult and deceptively straightforward by turns. It marries narrow fairways with tight greens that are nestled in a densely-vegetated mountainside setting. The course sits 228m (750 ft) above the resort center in the hills, in a beautiful setting which alone will keep the interest of players no matter what their handicap. Caddies are mandatory. There is also a short game practice area. *Upton District, Ocho Rios.* ☎ *876-975-0119 or* ☎ *876-975-0123. www.sandals.com/golf. 9 holes $70, 18 holes $100. AE, DC, MC, V.*

★ Tryall Golf & Beach Club (Sandy Bay). This is one of the most exclusive estates on the island and one of the best golf courses. An 18-hole par 72 course designed by Ralph Plummer, the prestigious Johnnie Walker World Championship has been hosted here. Needless to say, it's popular with the rich and famous. You never know who you might be holding up as you negotiate the tricky, tree-lined fairways and fast, unforgiving greens. As well as water hazards, there's a working water wheel and colonial stone columns to play around. This is not a course for beginners. ***To get there take the North Coast Highway west from Montego Bay for 20km (12 miles) to Sandy Bay (looking out for the estate's landmark feature—a huge, restored water mill—on your right).*** ☎ *876-956-5681. www.tryallclub.com. 18 holes $110–$145. AE, DC, MC, V.*

★★★ White Witch (Montego Bay). If this is the first course you ever play in Jamaica, it may also be the only course you'll ever want to play here. The combination of the arresting sea views from 16 of the holes; the well-tended greens and fairways; plus the professional, knowledgeable staff make for an unforgettable experience that you'll want to repeat time and again. It's

named after the legendary Annie Palmer—better known as the White Witch of Rose Hall because her husbands died mysteriously and at an alarming rate (see p 94). Robert von Hagge and Rick Baril designed this championship course on the rolling hills of Annie's former sugar plantation. There's not a flat hole on the course and even at the driving range you play off an elevated tee. White Witch is part of the Ritz Carlton Golf and Spa Resort (see p 127) and the clubhouse serves excellent food. ***1 Ritz Carlton Drive, Rose Hall, Montego Bay. ☎ 876-518-0174. www.whitewitchgolf.com. 18 holes: guests $120–$150, non-guests $130–$165, 9 holes at twilight $85–$99 per person. AE, DC, MC, V.***

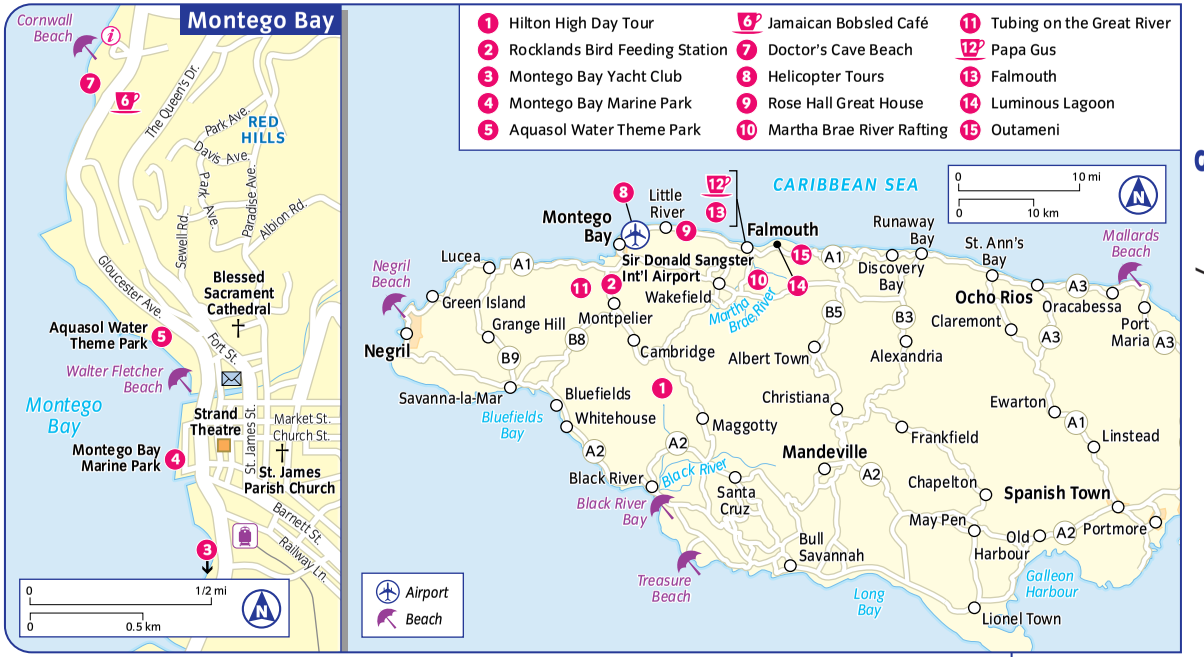
Caddies

Caddies tend to know the courses inside out and often prove to be a godsend, especially when the sea breeze wants to play a part in shaping your drive. Always consider hiring one, as it can make your round much more enjoyable and get you closer to scratch. At many courses they are mandatory. As a ballpark figure, tip your caddy between $15 and $30 depending on the green fee you've paid and how satisfied you are with the service and advice provided ●

5 The Best **Regional Tours**

Montego Bay

Previous page: Doctor's Cave Beach.



Montego Bay

'Mo' Bay'—Jamaica's biggest resort and second city—is a fun-packed place to be. It has white, sandy beaches and a wealth of activities and attractions to keep you amused whether messing about on the water, taking to the air, or staying on dry land. Here are some of my favorite haunts in the vicinity—each attraction is within an hour's drive of the city center. To see them all you will need to allow four days. To help you get your bearings, they are listed from east to west. **START: Montego Bay.**

1 ★ Hilton High Day Tour. Heading into the back country some 61m (200 ft) above Montego Bay, this organized tour combines a visit to a plantation, a village, a church, and a school. The staff at the Hilton Estate plantation lay on a hearty Jamaican country breakfast, while a calypso band plays. Guests are then introduced to the various crops and their uses—from papaya leaves that can be used as a meat tenderizer to obtaining red dye from annatto trees. A short walk through the village of St Leonards introduces tourists to the local characters—including a humorous pineapple farmer who reveals the fruit's potential as an aphrodisiac. After a lunch of spit-roast pork a final stop is made at pretty Seaford, known as 'The German Village' after its founders, who left Germany in 1835 to settle here and are now in their sixth generation. *7hr. ☎ 876-952-3343. Tour adults $63, children under 12 $44 (including pick-up from Montego Bay hotels). Tues, Wed, Fri, Sun. Map p 90.*

Head into the back country above Montego Bay for the Hilton High Day Tour.

2 ★ kids Rocklands Bird Feeding Station. This famed and much-loved attraction was started as a back-yard project many years ago by the late ornithologist Lisa Sammons. Known simply as 'the bird lady', Lisa spent years encouraging birds into her mature gardens to be fed by hand. Dozens now visit daily in anticipation of their feeder-bottle of sugar water, which visitors are invited to administer to the various birds. Over 100 species have been spotted here, including Orangequits, Common Ground Doves and hummingbirds (see p 71). *Turn off onto the Reading Road from the North Coast Highway until Anchovy where the attraction is signed.*

3 Montego Bay Yacht Club. Admittedly a little out of the way but, in my opinion, this is the most civilized place in Mo' Bay to enjoy a leisurely coffee or an expertly-mixed sundowner. Cocktails are served on the pool-side patio with views of the busy harbor and docks. *Sunset Drive. ☎ 876-979-8038. www.mobayyachtclub.com. Daily 7am–midnight.*

4 Montego Bay Marine Park. A large swathe of Montego Bay's coastline was established as a protected marine zone in 1991. It runs from the airport to the Great River and encompasses Bogue Lagoon, a nursing ground for fish and crustaceans. Within this 2,430- hectare (6,000-acre) marine reserve there are coral reefs, sea-grass beds, and mangrove forests, making it a thrilling place to snorkel, dive, kayak, or take a glass-bottomed boat ride. Trips can be arranged from hotel tour desks.

5 kids Aquasol Water Theme Park. The activities available on this stretch of sand—also known as Walter Fletcher's Beach—make it a mini resort in its own right. Located at the beginning of Gloucester Avenue, there are tennis courts, a go-kart track, water trampolines moored offshore, and every imaginable watersport to try—including pedal boats and jet skis. The shallow, clear waters are popular with all age groups. Full facilities including showers, parasol hire, and food outlets make this particularly suitable for families. Most days end with a reggae concert or stage shows. 🕘 *2hr–full day. Gloucester Avenue near Downtown.* ☎ *876-979-9447. Daily 10am–10pm. Map p 90.*

6 Jamaican Bobsled Café. This eatery takes the movie, Cool Runnings, a film about the country's incongruous Olympic bobsleigh team, as its theme. You can have your photo taken by a bobsled and then tuck into cocktails, coconut chicken strips, or their delicious thin and crispy pizzas. *Gloucester Avenue,* ☎ *876-940-7009 or* ☎ *876-952-1448. $$.*

7 ★★ Doctor's Cave Beach. One of the most beautiful beaches on the island is conveniently located right in the middle of Mo' Bay's busy shopping street, the 'Hip Strip' (as Gloucester Avenue is known). Mo' Bay attracted its first tourists back in the 1920s, when a British doctor claimed the blue waters meeting the white-sand shore here had curative properties. Hotels sprung up to accommodate the visitors and the resort has been growing ever since. *See p 59.*

8 ★ Helicopter Tours. Leaving from the domestic terminal of the resort's airport, short 15-minute

Rose Hall Great House.

Martha Brae Rafters Village.

tours follow the path of the coast before circling above Mo' Bay's Great Houses (plantation houses). Longer excursions of around an hour head inland to give aerial views of many of the island's most awe-inspiring sites, such as YS Falls, Negril Lighthouse, Cockpit Country, and Bog Walk Gorge. ***Donald Sangster International Airport. ☎ 876-974-1285. www.jamaicahelicopterservices.com. From $25–320 per person.***

9 ★★ Rose Hall Great House. The reputation of its former mistress Annie Palmer makes this the most eerie and notorious of all the old plantation estate houses to visit. It is also one of the most striking. Built in the 1700s from white stone, it stands above a lily pond, is edged by woodland, and enjoys views of the coast. This mansion once watched over a 2,430-hectare (6,000-acre) estate of sugar cane with around 2,000 workers. Over the decades, it fell into appalling disrepair until it was bought and restored in the 1960s by a benevolent American business tycoon. The house has also been refurnished with European antiques, many from the Georgian period, so that the rooms appear as they might have when Annie ruled the roost. Chinese silk screens, 18th-century French chandeliers, silk wallpaper, baroque console tables, and 18th-century mahogany chairs give the rooms an opulent feel. There is also a striking picture of Annie in a scarlet dress. As the tour guides point out, her eyes seem to follow you wherever you stand and apparently several visitors have reported seeing her head turn, too. According to folklore the ghost of Annie still haunts the house and there is a display of photos in the gift shop showing orbs and ghostly presences captured on camera by tourists. Arrive late afternoon to avoid the crowds. ***2hr. Rose Hall, 5km (3 miles) east of Montego Bay on the North Coast Highway. ☎ 876-953-2323. www.imexpages.com/rosehall. Admission: adults $20, children under 12 $10. Daily, 9am–6pm. Map p 90.***

10 Martha Brae River Rafting. Just 5km (3 miles) from Falmouth, take a lazy cruise downriver through a rich sea of thick rainforest. ***See p 55.***

11 Tubing on the Great River. In contrast to the serenity of bamboo rafting (see p 104), this is a hilarious and boisterous experience

Annie Palmer

Known as the White Witch of Rose Hall, Annie, who was of Anglo-Irish descent, is said to have been taken to Haiti as a child by her colonist parents where she was taught voodoo magic by her nanny. She came to Jamaica at 17 to find a husband and married John Rose Palmer, owner of Rose Hall, in 1820. Passionate Annie found it impossible to be faithful and proceeded to take a series of slave lovers. When John found out, he beat her and forbade her to continue her adulterous trysts. The furious Annie is said to have poisoned him so she could continue her lustful lifestyle. Her subsequent two husbands and numerous lovers also came to a sorry end when Annie tired of them in the bedroom. One day, however, she met her match. In 1931, her freed slave lover called Takoo killed Annie in cold blood because he believed she had cast a spell on his granddaughter. How much is true and how much is embellishment is hard to gauge, but many claim to have sighted Annie's ghost at Rose Hall.

organized by Chukka Caribbean Adventures. The company's tour guides serenade, push, spin, and splash you as the current sweeps your inflatable steadily down this body of cold water. Tours need to be booked directly in advance or through your hotel tour desk. ☎ *876-953-6699, www.chukkacaribbean.com. Adults $63, children $44.*

12 **Papa Gus.** This basic and cheerful restaurant and bar is a popular place to refuel on fresh fish snatched straight from the sea by Falmouth's merry band of fishermen. Steamed snapper and parrot fish are dished up with green banana and scrumptious dumplings. *Foreshore Road, Falmouth.* ☎ *876-410-4802. $–$$.*

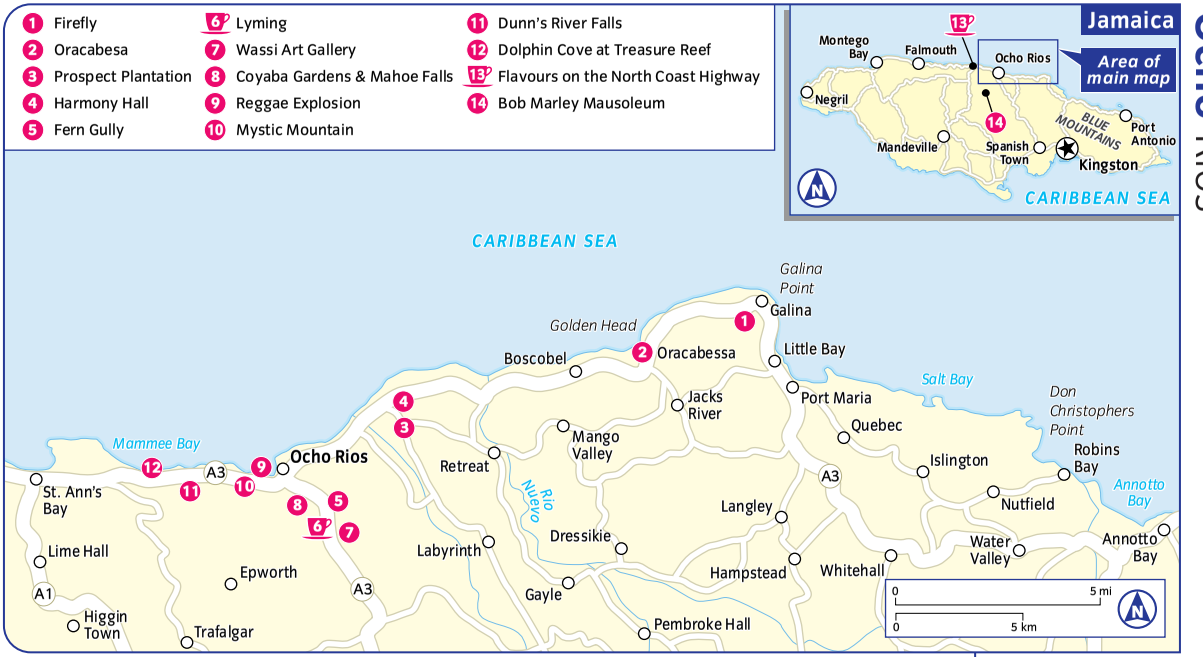
The streets of Falmouth.

Learn about Jamaica's history the fun way at Outameni.

13 ★ **Falmouth.** A wander through the Georgian square here with a fountain at its center, and the surrounding streets of period town houses, villas, and stores, gives you the sense of stepping back in time. Although now a fishing community, Falmouth was once the center of the sugar industry, and the money made at the town's port helped fund the building of the Great Houses (plantation houses) around Montego Bay. Falmouth is in the process of enjoying a renaissance. The historic buildings are being systematically restored and a new cruise ship pier will welcome international liners. Wednesday is market day—when this otherwise sleepy town really comes alive. ***See p 47.***

14 ★ kids **Luminous Lagoon.** A boat trip leaves the quay at Glistening Waters Marina around dusk and heads across the bay to see the rare phosphorescent micro-organisms that inhabit the lagoon's waters. They store sunlight by day and shimmer in bursts of electric green-blue light when disturbed at night. Trail your hand in the dark water to activate an instant twinkling glow of mini neon lights. Or jump in for a swim and you will be surrounded by natural fairy lights. ***See p 55.***

15 ★★★ kids **Outameni.** This fascinating exhibition-cum-theme-park provides an easy, fun, and interesting way to become versed in Jamaica's history. The guided tour unfolds with a succession of mini stage plays, recounting and capturing the feel of the native Taino, Spanish, and British colonial eras, and finally the island's independence. Jamaica's present-day pride, achievements, and vibrancy are energetically staged in a grand finale that includes a visit to a virtual dancehall. The tour ends with a cold soda, a banana chip snack, and the chance to learn a few dance moves. Or you can simply sit and watch other tourists gyrate to island rhythms in the capable hands of the attraction's guides, dancers, and actors that are as charismatic as they are dynamic. ***See p 40.***


1 Firefly
2 Oracabesa
3 Prospect Plantation
4 Harmony Hall
5 Fern Gully
6 Lyming
7 Wassi Art Gallery
8 Coyaba Gardens & Mahoe Falls
9 Reggae Explosion
10 Mystic Mountain
11 Dunn's River Falls
12 Dolphin Cove at Treasure Reef
13 Flavours on the North Coast Highway
14 Bob Marley Mausoleum
Jamaica
Area of main map
Montego Bay
Falmouth
Ocho Rios
Negril
Mandeville
Spanish Town
Kingston
Port Antonio
BLUE MOUNTAINS
CARIBBEAN SEA
CARIBBEAN SEA
Galina Point
Galina
Golden Head
Oracabessa
Little Bay
Boscobel
Salt Bay
Jacks River
Port Maria
Don Christophers Point
Quebec
Mammee Bay
Mango Valley
Retreat
Ocho Rios
Islington
Robins Bay
St. Ann's Bay
A3
Rio Nuevo
Langley
Nutfield
Annotto Bay
Lime Hall
Labyrinth
Dressikie
Water Valley
Epworth
Hampstead
Whitehall
A1
Gayle
Higgin Town
Trafalgar
Pembroke Hall
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Ocho Rios and its environs are James Bond country. It was from his beachfront home that author Ian Fleming penned the spy-novel bestsellers that later became international blockbuster movies. The flamboyant English playwright and actor, Noel Coward, also resided here. Aside from the literary connections, 'Ochi', as it's referred to colloquially, is packed with cultural, natural, and recreational attractions. They are listed here from the farthest east to the farthest west. To tour them all would take five days. Alternatively, you can simply pick out shorter excursions to suit your itinerary. **START: Ocho Rios.**

Statue of Noel Coward at Firefly.

1 ★★ Firefly. Ian Fleming chose to live by the sea while his friend Noel Coward preferred to reside here at his beloved 'Firefly', high on a clifftop with its grandiose views of the headland to Port Maria and beyond. Unlike Fleming, Coward lived in Jamaica year round. He spent the latter part of his life writing and entertaining at this modest, single-story house. Photographs, ornaments, bedding, books, and even sheet music that belonged to the English actor, singer, and writer remain in place and give a glimpse of his quirky personality. Renowned for his sparkling wit, Coward and his partner Graham Payne held regular raucous cocktail parties for the stars at their home: Sean Connery, Elizabeth Taylor, Joan Collins, Lionel Bart, Ivor Novello, and Marlene Dietrich are all said to have enjoyed his hospitality here. Coward also received the Queen Mother and Princess Margaret. The crockery these royal guests used is still laid out on the table. Coward died here in 1973 and is buried in the grounds. A statue of the great man stands admiring the view from the pretty garden at the front of the house. 🕘 *2hr. Grandstone, Port Maria.* ☎ *876-725-0920. Admission $10. Mon–Thurs and Sat 9am–5pm. Map p 96.*

2 Oracabesa. Famous as the fishing village where Ian Fleming settled, you'll see his celebrated

Visit the 17th-century Great House at Prospect Plantation.

Goldeneye estate set back from the road to your right. It's built on a private bluff and is closed to the public. Make a detour instead at the sign (just by the gas station) for James Bond Beach to admire the stretch of coast which was to prove so inspirational for his writing.

3 Prospect Plantation. A tour of this 404-hectare (1,000-acre) plantation is both fun and educational. Jitney tours take you to see all that grows here, from cassava to sugar cane, and to watch estate workers scale the trunks of coconut palms to demonstrate how the fruit is harvested. In addition, there are ostriches to feed, a butterfly house, camels and horses to ride, and bees to see. Their honey is on sale in the gift shop. The estate's 17th-century Great House can be visited, too, and has an arresting Mahogany and Blue Mahoe wood interior. ***2hr. 876-994-1085, www.prospectplantationtours.com. Admission: adults $32, children $20. Mon–Fri, 8am–4pm. Map p 96.***

See Jamaican art at the top floor gallery at Harmony Hall.

4 Harmony Hall. This contemporary art gallery occupies the second floor of a beautifully- ornate colonial house with wrap-around balcony. As well as seeing some exciting Jamaican art, you have the opportunity to look inside a period property. While classical music plays, wander between rooms showcasing paintings, ceramics, sculptures, and crafts created by the country's artists. All work is original and many pieces are very reasonably priced. There is also an excellent book and gift shop. ***30 min. North Coast Highway, Tower Isle, east of Ocho Rios. 876-974-2870. www.harmonyhall.com. Admission free. Tues–Sun, 10am–5.30pm. Map p 96.***

5 ★ Fern Gully. As you head south out of town, you'll drive through this natural attraction—an old riverbed that takes a twisting path through dense rainforest. Giant ferns and foliage intertwine overhead, hiding the sky. In the cool half light, random shards of sunshine break through the fronds and mist to give the feeling you are driving through a kaleidoscope of a dozen shades of green. ***45 min. Route A3 south towards Walkerswood. Admission free. Map p 96.***

6 Lyming. 5km (3 miles) south of Fern Gully at the village of Walkerswood, this welcoming restaurant-style jerk stop serves excellent jerk chicken cooked fresh over pimento-wood fired pits. Dine on the sun-backed deck at the back of the restaurant, which has views across the open countryside and to a great house in the distance. ***876-917-2318. $.***

7 Wassi Art Gallery. Many of the talented potters at this sizeable artists' colony near Fern Gully are self-taught, but their creative endeavors all have a bold, eclectic style, in keeping with the gallery's philosophy. This is taken from the old Jamaican word *Wassi* which means 'being terrific with impact and as sharp as a bee's sting'. Much of their work is inspired by the island's natural wonders—fruits, trees, and plant life. Tour the pottery then peruse the artists' work (pieces cost from $4). ***45 min. Bougainvillea Drive, Great Pond. South of Ocho Rios off the A3 towards Kingston. 876-974-5044. www.wassiart.com. Admission free. Mon–Sat 9am–5pm. Public holidays 10am–4pm. Map p 96.***

8 Coyaba Gardens & Mahoe Falls. This elevated garden is nestled in the hills above the resort. Take a refreshing dip at the cooling waterfall and pool for swimming, then visit the small history museum that has an eclectic collection of exhibits from the Tainos, Jamaica's early inhabitants. ***See p 74.***

9 ★ Reggae Explosion. This hall-of-fame-style museum in resort is a treat for music lovers seeking a colorful, potted history of Jamaican music—from mento to ska, reggae and dancehall. Inventive audio-visual exhibits are complemented by energetic guides who'll even teach you a few dance moves (see p 43). ***1hr. Island Village complex, Turtle Beach Road.***

The road through Fern Gully.

Climbing up Dunn's River Falls.

☎ 876-675-8895. Admission $15. Mon–Sat, 9am–5pm. Map p 96.

10 kids **Mystic Mountain.** A path beside rock pools and streams leads through rainforest to a chair lift. You'll then take a journey high above the trees to a hilltop station. From here there are breathtaking panoramic views of Ochi, and a fun museum that tells tales of Jamaica's sporting heroes and its legendary bobsled team. I personally love the zip-wire trail that takes you back downhill (at an extra cost). The main attraction, however, is the roller-coaster-style bobsled ride that hurtles you around the hilltop at speed—or more slowly if you grip hold of the brake! *🕘 2hr. North Coast Highway, west of Ocho Rios. ☎ 876-974-3990. www.rainforestrams.com. Admission $42. Daily 8.30am–5.30pm. Map p 96.*

11 ★ **Dunn's River Falls.** These spectacular falls, hugged by a canopy of rainforest, are Jamaica's most visited attraction. Despite being highly commercialized and often crowded, climbing and wading your way up through the clear waters that tumble 183m (600 ft) down the mountainside in majestic tiers, is still one of the most memorable experiences in Jamaica. Sure-footed guides are on hand to lead the way and if you wear sneakers—or the jelly shoes available to hire—negotiating a path between giant boulders and rock pools in your swimwear is fun and rewarding. You'll find a craft market and food stalls at the end of the climb and a pleasant sandy beach at the base of the falls. *🕘 3hr. On the North Coast Highway just west of Ocho Rios. ☎ 876-974-2857 or ☎ 876-974-5944. www.dunnsriverfallsja.com. Admission: adults $15, children 2–11 $12. Sat–Tues 8.30am–4pm. Wed–Fri (cruise ship days) 7am–4pm. Map p 96.*

Travel Tip

To get the most from your visit to Dunn's River Falls bear in mind that you don't have to climb all the way to the top. There are several earlier exit points if you find the going gets tough. Following a guide makes the ascent easier, as they know the safest and quickest route up. Try to

be part of a smaller group if you are seeking a relaxing experience—holding hands with a dozen strangers as you make your way to the top can make for a noisy and slow-going climb.

12 kids Dolphin Cove at Treasure Reef. This marine center on a private beach opposite Dunn's River Falls gives visitors the chance to be a trainer for the day; hold and feed sharks; touch stingrays; and interact or swim with dolphins in their penned enclosures (see p 39). *3hr–full day. North Coast Highway, west of Ocho Rios. ☎ 876-974-5335. www.dolphincovejamaica.com. Admission: adults $45, children 6–12 $30 including kayaking, interaction with stingrays, nature trail, boat ride, and shark shows. Dolphin entrance packages range from $67 to $195. The half-day trainer program costs $400. Daily 8.30am–5.30pm. Map p 96.*

13 Flavours on the North Coast Highway. This brightly-painted restaurant on the beach is a popular local dining spot with great music and a stage for evening entertainment. The spicy shrimp, conch, and lobster are especially delicious. Runaway Bay (just before the Brown's Town turn off). *☎ 876-973-5457 or ☎ 876-796-3493. $$.*

14 Bob Marley Mausoleum. A winding road from Runaway Bay takes you through glorious, rolling countryside to the childhood home and final resting place of Bob Marley. Rastafarian guides (some of whom are members of the extended Marley family) lead tours of his house, meditation spot, and mausoleum, and share stories about the singer along the way. There is also a restaurant serving mainly vegetarian dishes and a small gift shop (see p 96). *1hr.*

Ian Fleming

The creator of 007 was a journalist by trade who became an intelligence officer during World War II. Ian Fleming first came to Jamaica in 1943 for a naval conference and immediately fell in love with the landscape, vowing to return after the war. From 1946 until his death at the age of 54, this is where Fleming wintered and wrote all of his James Bond spy novels and short stories. During his time here, he glanced upon a book about West Indies ornithology by James Bond, which gave him the name for his infamous secret agent. The success of Fleming's early novels enabled him to buy a piece of prime oceanfront land just east of Oracabesa. He called his estate Goldeneye. His books have sold over 100 million copies worldwide to date, as well as being adapted to become movies. The films shot in Jamaica include ***Live and Let Die***, ***Dr No,*** and ***The Man with the Golden Gun***. In ***Dr No*** Honey Ryder (Ursula Andress) and James (Sean Connery) take a provocative dip at the base of Dunn's River Falls.

1 Reach Falls
2 Dawn's Bar & Snack Stop
3 Beach Life
4 The Blue Lagoon
5 River Rafting on the Rio Grande
6 Belinda's Riverside Canteen
7 The Folly
8 Christ Church
CARIBBEAN SEA
Passley Gardens
Mother Beck's Beach
Navy Island
Norwich
Rio Grande
West Harbour
East Harbour
Port Antonio
Drapers
A4
Fairy Hill
Boston Beach
Boston Bay
Breastworks
Athenry Gardens & Nonsuch Caves
Berridale
Fox Caves
Scatter Falls
Nonsuch
Sherwood Forest
Fellowship
Place of Interest
Beach
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0 1 km
N

In 1946 Errol Flynn described Port Antonio as the most beautiful woman he had ever laid eyes upon. Indeed, what Port Antonio lacks in themed and organized attractions, it makes up for with its beguiling natural beauty. The actor had never intended to come to Jamaica but was forced to shelter in the harbor here during a storm in 1946. He spent the next decade vacationing or living in the region. Many who come here for just a day trip, or by accident, return time and again just like Flynn. **START: Port Antonio. Trip length: Two days (including some time on the beach).**

Spend a morning relaxing in the clear waters of Reach Falls.

1 ★ Reach Falls. Come to swim and spend a morning relaxing at this intimate waterfall, tucked away in the forested foothills of the John Crow Mountains and screened by dense tropical vegetation. The main cascade gushes between limestone rocks, creating a pool of clear water to swim in. A love scene from the movie *Cocktail* starring Tom Cruise was filmed at these falls and the cave behind the cascade has become a popular place to steal a kiss for courting couples. Sadly, in recent times, the falls have become more commercialized and an unattractive concrete walkway has been added, stealing some of the romance long associated with this out-of-the-way beauty spot. *1hr. Manchioneal, east of Port Antonio on the A4. ☎ 876-993-8863. www.reachfalls.com. Admission: adults $10, children $5. Wed–Sun 8.30am–4.30pm. Map p 102.*

2 Dawn's Bar & Snack Stop. Food stalls line the roadside as you head back from Manchioneal towards Port Antonio. Dawn's, the last in line on the left, has the best conch soup in town—flavorsome and piping hot. The fried fish is also tasty. *☎ 876-859-8749. $.*

3 Beach Life. The dazzling coves hidden at intervals along Port Antonio's shoreline are among the most beautiful and unspoiled on the island. First you'll pass Boston Bay, where the waves are big enough for surfing and the setting is arresting, with

Boston Bay.

trees bordering the shore and soft, yellow sand underfoot. A little farther west on the coast road is lively Winnifred's Beach, a free, public beach that is always a hive of activity. Continuing towards the center of town you'll reach San San and Frenchman's Cove. These private beaches charge a small fee and have immaculate sands met by calm, blue-green water. There is also a pretty, petite beach at the Errol Flynn Marina with views back to town and across the harbor to Navy Island (see the 'Best Beaches' section in Chapter 4). ***Map p 102.***

4 **The Blue Lagoon.** This spring-fed, tree-shrouded pool of cool water changes its shade of blue depending on the time of day and the color of the sky. Although it has been officially closed for some time, you can still walk to its edge to take a photo, but expect to be approached by hawkers selling souvenirs. They may also ask you for an entrance fee or an offering of a few dollars to be your guide. It's easier to enlist the services of local fishermen, who will usually be happy to take you on a boat tour of the lagoon—which is accessible from the sea—and the Port Antonio coastline. Expect to pay around $75–100 for a two-hour trip. ***1–2hr. 13km (9 miles) east of Port Antonio on the A4. Map p 102.***

5 ★★★ **River Rafting on the Rio Grande.** There's no denying, this is an unusual way to travel—a strapping Jamaican propels you by bamboo pole on a bamboo raft along the winding path of this picturesque river. On a typical journey, you can expect to see wading birds and herons, fishermen landing their catch, women washing clothes, and children swimming, all against a backdrop of changing scenery—from swaying grasses to limestone cliffs. This excursion was created by Errol Flynn. He had noticed bananas being transported along the river in this way and decided it would be an ideal way to entertain his ladies. He also named the narrow section where the river flows through a gorge 'Lovers' Lane'. The 13km (8 mile) voyage takes between two and three hours from the starting point at Berridale to Rafters' Rest where the Rio Grande joins the sea. It is a laid-back experience for the passengers, but quite a workout for the raft captains, so remember to give them a tip of $10–15 for their efforts. ***4hr. Berridale south of Port Antonio. 876-993-5778 or 876-913-5434. $72 per two-person raft. Daily 9am–4pm. Map p 102.***

6 **Belinda's Riverside Canteen.** From a humble bamboo kitchen on the bank of the Rio Grande, Belinda cooks up fabulous food at the halfway point of the rafting route. Daily specials range from curried chicken to spicy steamed fish with roasted bread fruit. When you board your raft, ask your captain to call ahead so the food can be prepared and cooked ready for your arrival. ***876-389-8826. $–$$.***

7 **The Folly.** Only the crumbling ruins of this once dream mansion remain. Occupying a dreamy spot

River rafting on the Rio Grande.

looking out to sea, the building once boasted 60 extravagant rooms. It was built by an American millionaire as a luxury vacation home for his family, but sadly the builders used salt water instead of fresh water when mixing the cement. From the moment of its completion this unfortunate error meant its days were numbered. Now fenced off, it is still a pleasant landmark to take a stroll around. 🕘 ***45 min. From East Harbour, follow Alan Avenue beyond the cricket green and you will come to the Folly Estate. Map p 102.***

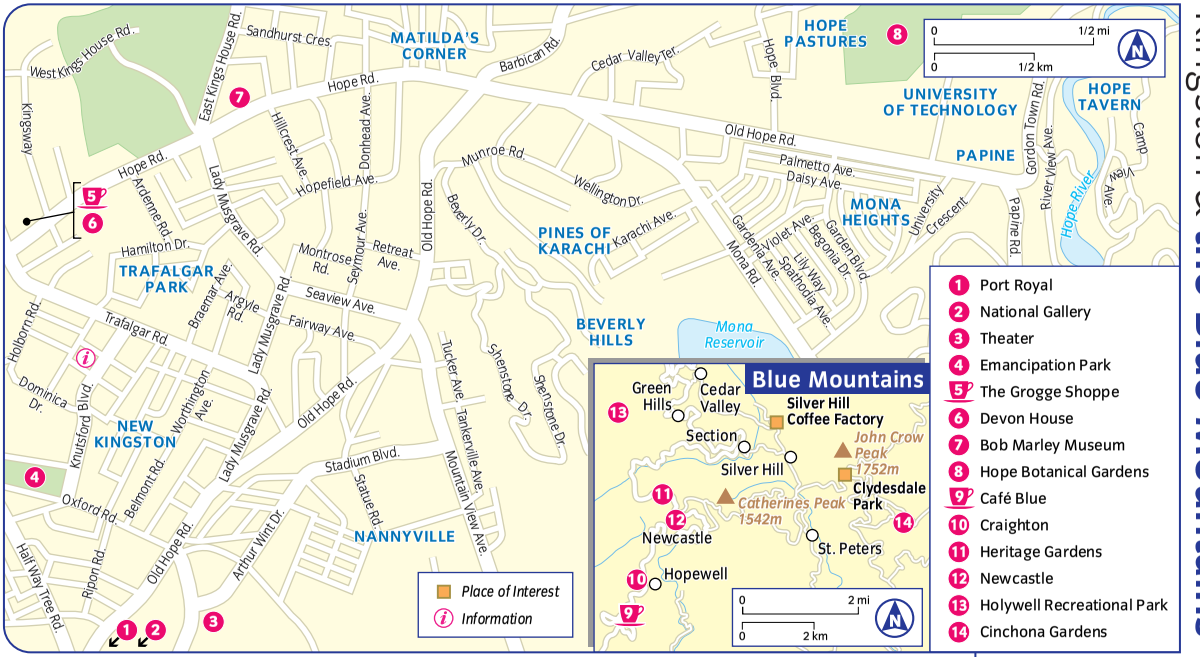
8 **Christ Church.** This Anglican house of worship is perhaps the town's most captivating building. A tall, rectangular, red-brick structure which dates back to 1840, it remains in a state of outstanding repair. ***Corner of Harbour Street and Alan Avenue. Map p 102.***

Travel Tip

Port Antonio is renowned for its deep-sea fishing. Each year, during September and October, the well-attended International Marlin Tournament is held. It attracts anglers from across the world, eager to land a prize-winning Marlin. They can grow up to an astonishing 5 meters (16 ft) in length. ☎ ***876-927-0145 or ☎ 876-909-8818. www.errolflynnmarina.com.***

Christ Church dates back to 1840.

Kingston & the Blue Mountains



Kingston is the gateway to Jamaica. It is the pulse of the nation—a fusion of music, culture, and history. Walk among the throngs as you visit the main attractions and you will soon feel the buzz. It's busy, noisy, and dusty, and yet uplifting, and when you need time out there are fabulous parks that temporarily make the city feel a million miles away. This is the most densely populated part of the island and yet just over an hour's drive away from downtown you can be in the lonely, misty heights of the hypnotic Blue Mountains. **START: Kingston. Trip Length: Four days.**

1 ★ Port Royal. Beyond Kingston's airport, The Palisadoes—a wide, open road—takes you along a spit of land to the remote village of Port Royal—the inspiration for sets in Disney's *Pirates of the Caribbean* movies. Real-life buccaneers, the most famous being Captain Morgan and Blackbeard, traded their booty and prepared their vessels for further piracy missions from here in the mid-1600s. Wine, women, and song were the order of the day until an earthquake in 1692 plummeted much of the city to the ocean bed. Today, it is a sleepy fishing community. Just one building of the pirate era remains—**Fort Charles,** an impressive red-brick stronghold with walls studded with cannon. It houses a **Maritime Museum** that has display maps showing what the city looked like over three hundred years ago; model ships; and an exhibition of artifacts recovered from Captain Morgan's days including clay pipes and grogg bottles (see p 49). 🕘 *3hr. Map p 106.*

2 National Gallery. Permanent and temporary exhibitions combine here to showcase the largest collection of paintings and sculpture by Jamaican artists in the country. Highlights include work by Edna Manley, David Pottinger, and Christopher Gonzalez. 🕘 *1–2hr. 12 Ocean Boulevard.* ☎ *876-922-1561. Admission: adults $2, children $1. Tues–Thurs 10am–4.30pm. Fri 10am–4pm, Sat 10am–3pm. Map p 106.*

3 Theater. Touring companies take theater to all corners of Jamaica, but Kingston is the hub of the performing arts from ballet to pantomime, plays to opera. The Little Theatre and its sister stage The Little Little Theatre have the most diverse year-round program of performances. *4 Tom Redcam Avenue.* ☎ *876-926-6129.*

4 ★ Emancipation Park. Few state parks have more arresting statues at their entrance than the one created by Jamaican artist Laura Facey. The huge, bronze statues of a naked black male and female, facing each other and rising from a pool of water, caused much controversy when they were unveiled. Entitled 'Redemption

Statue by Laura Facey in Emancipation Park.

Song' the ensemble is intended to symbolize the rise from slavery to freedom, but the nudity offended some. Beyond the statue, joggers, families, and couples stroll around the meandering walkways and fountains. Entertainment events are frequently held here; check the website for details. 🕘 ***45 min. The corner of Knutsford Boulevard and Oxford Road. www.emancipationpark.org.ja. Admission free. Mon–Fri, 5am–11pm, Sat–Sun, 5am–midnight. Map p 106.***

5 **The Grogge Shoppe.** A casual bar and restaurant with an English pub feel. Pop in just for an ice-cold Red Stripe or tuck into a generous portion of curried chicken, fish stew, or conch deep-fried in batter. ***Hope Road at Devon House. ☎ 876-960-9730. $$.***

6 ★★ **Devon House.** Be sure to see this beautifully-restored mansion set back from the road in stately gardens with a central fountain. Built in 1881 for Jamaica's first black millionaire, George Steibel, the rooms are furnished with exquisite antiques and reproduction furniture to recreate the style of late 19th-century living for Jamaica's rich and well-to-do. In the courtyard to the rear of the house you'll find a selection of eateries, an ice cream parlor, and specialty shops. ***See p 48.***

7 **Bob Marley Museum.** See where the world's most famous reggae singer lived and worked, and learn about his life and musical career in an upbeat one-hour guided tour of his former home and Tuff Gong Recording Studio. A statue of Marley with his guitar stands in the courtyard together with his Land Rover, and the walls are splashed with bright murals depicting key moments in the singer's life. Photography is forbidden, except in the courtyard and you have to leave your cameras, phones, and bags at the front desk (see p 44).

8 ★ **Hope Botanical Gardens.** At the heart of the city, the manicured lawns of this green space sit between towering palms and flower

The beautifully-restored Devon House.

Café Blue.

beds bursting with color and offer a pleasant escape from the buzz and bustle of the capital. Little wonder it is a favorite place with the population of Kingston to stroll, have lunch, or a family picnic. ***See p 74.***

9 **Café Blue.** This small, funky cafe has a downtown-coffee-shop feel, yet it is in a remote location on the drive up to the Blue Mountains. Admire the views while sipping Mocha, Americano, herbal teas, or fruit smoothies accompanied by a mouthwatering selection of home-baked sweet pastries and cakes. *Irish Town Road. ☎ 876-944-8918. $.*

10 ★ **Craighton.** This 32-hectare (80-acre) coffee estate, 792 meters (2,600 ft) above Kingston was established over 200 years ago. Tours of the property start at the strawberry-pink, gabled, clap-board Great House, which dates from the turn of the 19th century. The growing and production processes are detailed in a short talk while visitors sample the estate's coffee in bone china cups. This is followed by a walk through the plantation where the berries are hand-picked from bushes lining terraces etched into the steep slopes. Coffee can be purchased at the end of the visit at a very reasonable price. *1–2hr. Irish Town. ☎ 876-929-8490. www.craightonestate.com. Admission: adults $15, children $7. Call or e-mail ahead for reservations. Map p 106.*

Travel Tip

Infrastructure in the Blue Mountains isn't of the high standard you will find on the north coast. Adverse weather conditions and a poor rate of repair mean the roads are bumpy and pot-holed. At points they are also precipitous and only just wide enough for two vehicles. Although it can be nerve-racking at first for less experienced drivers, with common sense and patience the rewards far outweigh the effort. Just an hour's drive from Kingston takes you deep into a wild, natural world of astonishing beauty.

The clap-board Great House at Craighton Estate.

Reaching the Pinnacle

At 2,256m (7,401 ft) above sea level, the Blue Mountain Peak is the highest point on the island. Climbing it is Jamaica's ultimate endurance test, as well as one of the island's greatest highlights. The bluish mists that shroud the peak give the Blue Mountains their name. These only lift around dawn, and even then not every day. Therefore it is customary to set off on the 9.5km (6 mile) hike in the early hours. That way you reach the summit in time for sunrise. You can see much of Jamaica from the top and, on a clear day, neighboring Cuba. The trek shouldn't trouble experienced hikers with a moderately good level of fitness. The section called Jacob's ladder is the hardest, steepest section, and you'll reach it in the first half of the ascent. This is where many people give up. Try not to, because after that the trek becomes easier. If you can forgo watching the sunrise, it's more pleasurable to leave at dawn. You'll then see how the flora changes with the altitude and you will be more likely to see endemic birds. On average the hike takes 3–4 hours and the trail is trickiest to negotiate after rainfall.

11 Heritage Gardens. This is an ideal spot for a picnic lunch. The garden was established in 1788 by Irish naval officer and botanist turned coffee-estate entrepreneur, Matthew Wallen. A small Georgian cottage (on the site of an 18th-century coffee works) contains a small exhibition of the site's history. Behind it, the garden—strewn with agapanthus, arum lilies, sennas, and spathodia—encircles a series of ponds. 🕘 ***1hr. Cold Spring south of Newcastle. ☎ 876-960-8627 or ☎ 876-960-0794. www.heritagegardensjamaica.com. Daily 9am–5pm. Map p 106.***

The barrack houses at Newcastle.

Chinchona's Victorian house and botanic gardens.

⓬ **Newcastle.** This army barracks and parade ground is steeped in military history. British, Canadian, and now Jamaican forces have been stationed here for over 150 years. Their various insignias decorate a white-washed wall, which is guarded by a cannon. The red roofs of the barrack houses contrast sharply with the green canopy of the rainforest, and there are panoramic views of Kingston and its harbor (see p 48). 🕘 *1½hr.*

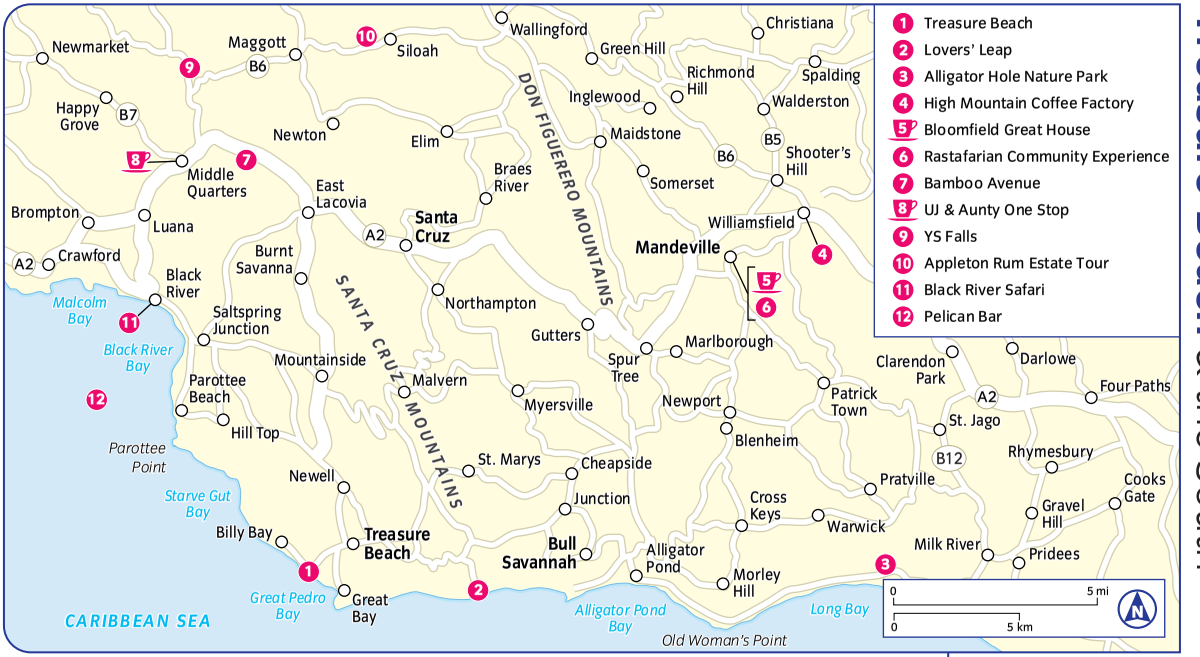
⓭ kids **Holywell Recreational Park.** Pick up a free guide of the park's walking routes at the entrance hut and follow one of several moderately easy hiking trails through this 121-hectare (300-acre) nature reserve. This scenic slice of protected mountain terrain is a veritable haven for birds, flowers, and butterflies. Remember to bring your binoculars (see p 67). 🕘 *2–4hr. Hardware Gap, north of Newcastle.* ☎ *876-920-8278. www.greenjamaica.org.jm. Admission: adults $10, children $5. Tues–Sun 10am–6pm. Map p 106.*

⓮ ★★★ **Cinchona Gardens.** At 1,524 meters (5,000 ft) above sea level, and with impressive views of the Blue Mountain range, a visit to this botanic garden is magical and gives the feeling that you have arrived at the top of the world. Beds of agapanthus and azaleas flourish around a crumbling Victorian house, while the dilapidated greenhouses, raised beds, and lily pond all hint at the former splendor of this faded colonial treasure (see p 73). 🕘 *1½hr.*

Travel Tip

The number of visitors heading up into the Blue Mountains is small in comparison to the numbers who vacation at the beach resorts. Organized tourism is still in its infancy here, and food options are limited. The easiest and safest way to book guided bird-watching, hiking, and other excursions is through your accommodation. Arranging packed lunches is also advisable.

Treasure Beach & the South



Many describe the south coast as 'Jamaica as it used to be'—far from the madding crowds, before the island's popularity as a tourist destination soared. The beaches are backed by cottages and fishing villages, where the extent of watersports is bringing your own snorkel and mask along. Hotels, high-rise or otherwise, are few and far between, and there is only one city—Mandeville—in the region. Take to the often lonely roads here, and some of the most memorable and least-visited attractions await you. Either follow this tour, or simply choose one or two of the more appealing sights to visit. **START: Treasure Beach. Trip length: Four days.**

1 ★★ Treasure Beach. Before heading inland, take an early morning swim at one of the four beaches that line the bumpy coast road of this low-key resort. Whichever bay you choose—Billy's, Frenchman's, Calabash, or Great Pedro—you are likely to have it virtually to yourself.

2 Lovers' Leap. This is also the scene of Jamaica's best-known tragic love story. A plaque marks the spot where two sweethearts are said to have jumped to their death 488 meters (1,600 ft) below when they were prevented from being together. A terrace behind the restaurant affords sweeping views of the headland for a small fee. The grassy cliffs that plunge to a curtain of rocks, lashed by the sea, below you, are characteristic of this stretch of the coastline. *See p 55.* 🕘 *1hr.*

3 Alligator Hole Nature Park. This is one of the few remaining places in the world where there is a chance of seeing the shy and near-extinct manatee—or sea cow as it is known locally. They are fed by the caretakers each afternoon. Boat trips to seek out these bulbous creatures with their paddle-like flippers are also sometimes available during the day. 🕘 *2hr. Around 32km (20 miles) east of Alligator Pond. Daily 9am–4pm. Admission free. Map p 112.*

Learn the tragic story of Lover's Leap.

4 High Mountain Coffee Factory. A foreman shows you around the factory floor of this small coffee-processing operation. Watch as workers roast, grind, and pack coffee from local plantations. 🕘 *1hr. Main Street, Williamsfield, north-east of Mandeville on the A2.* ☎ *876-963-4211 or* ☎ *876-963-4319. www.wallenfordblue.com. Admission: adults $3, children $2. Mon–Fri 8am–5pm. Map p 112.*

5 Bloomfield Great House. Enjoy vistas of Mandeville while lunching on the grand, colonial verandah of this upscale but relaxed

Bamboo Avenue.

restaurant. The menu features modern Mediterranean dishes, salads, and sandwiches (see p 155). ***Perth Road, Mandeville. ☎ 876-962-7130. $$$.***

6 ★★ Rastafarian Community Experience. Meet the Rastas of Old England village, learn about their beliefs, and be treated to a drumming performance on this community tour that leaves from the Astra Country Inn in Mandeville. A typical 'Ital' lunch (Rastafarian cuisine) of stewed vegetables flavored with herbs and spices is also provided. ***4hr. The Countrystyle Community Tourism Network, Astra Country Inn, 62 Ward Avenue, Mandeville. ☎ 876-488-7207 or ☎ 876-585-8600. www.countrystylejamaica.com. From $60. Tours daily. Map p 112.***

7 ★ Bamboo Avenue. Bamboo rises to the sky on either side of the A2 between Lacovia and Middle Quarters, meeting in the middle of the road to form a green tunnel of shimmering leaves and dappled light. Originally planted in the 19th century to provide a shady respite for plantation workers from the midday heat, it now makes for a soothing drive or cycle ride. There is space to pull off the road at any point to snap a photograph. ***30 min.***

8 UJ & Aunty One Stop. Look out for the hand-painted sign of this pale blue hut on the left-hand side of the road as you head west. This cook shop on the A2 at Middle Quarters is the best place to pick up a bag of the freshly-steamed tangy, salty hot shrimps that the area is famed for. They are paid for by weight, but don't under order—they are very moreish. ***$.***

9 ★★★ kids YS Falls. For many years this was one of Jamaica's best-kept secrets, a waterfall hidden in a remote part of the island at the heart of a cattle ranch. The owners of the private estate were focused on agriculture and only locals knew

The fresh-water pool at the base of YS Falls.

Appleton Rum Estate.

about the falls, coming to swim and picnic at weekends. Gradually word got out and curious tourists were eager to see the eight cascades here that were said to rival those of Dunn's River. A few villagers established themselves as tour guides, leading visitors cross country to the falls. The number wishing to sneak a peak grew so rapidly that the estate's owners decide to officially open as an attraction. Tractor-drawn jitneys now take you across the ranch through pastureland to the base of the falls. A wooden staircase then leads up through a jungle of wild flowers and ferns for a view of the highest cascade. After torrential rain the natural pools created by the gushing waters can become troublesome to swim in. Instead, take a dip in the beautifully-designed fresh-water pool at the base of the falls, which blends seamlessly into the foliage for year-round safe swimming. There is also a children's playground. The well-stocked gift shop has quality souvenirs and serves great coffee. 🕘 ***2hr–half-day. On the B6 north of Middle Quarters.***

☎ ***876-997-6360. www. ysfalls.com. Admission: adults $15, children $7.50. Tues–Sun 9.30am–3.30pm. Closed on national holidays and Mon. Map p 112.***

10 ★★ Appleton Rum Estate Tour. Over 10 million barrels of rum are produced each year from the 4,613 hectares (11,400 acres) of sugar cane that sway in the fields around the Appleton distillery. Such is the demand for their brand that the company is looking to purchase further crop land. The rich soil combined with the unique microclimate of the Nassau Valley, with its sunny mornings and rainy afternoons, together help to make this smooth, rich rum with vanilla and coco undertones. Tours start with a secret-blend rum punch that only five of the staff know how to make. This is followed by a tour of the distillery and a taste-testing session of all the rums and rum creams produced by Appleton. George Washington considered it to be the best in the world. See if you agree! A garden of antique exhibits shows how

rum was produced before the advent of electricity. The rum is aged in American oak barrels for between three and thirty years. When you are standing in the vast warehouses, a heady aroma of licorice and caramel flavors is in itself an intoxicating experience. 🕘 ***2hr. At Siloah on the B6. ☎ 876-963-9215 or ☎ 876-963-9217. www.appletonrum.com. Admission: adults $18, children $15. Mon–Sat 9am–3.30pm. Map p 112.***

11 ★★ Black River Safari. This is Jamaica's second longest river. It runs 71km (44 miles) from the Cockpit Country in Trelawny to the charming seaside town of Black River in the south. In the 18th century, the river was used to transport sugar and rum. Now it is a haven for marine birds, hiding between the bulrushes and lavender-colored water hyacinths. Hop on a boat (at the harbor beneath the bridge pontoon) for a morning or afternoon trip along the Black River's 30 navigable kilometers (18.5 miles). The dark, mysterious waters of the Black River (named after its black peat subsoil) are home to some 300 crocodiles. At first you'll see them sunning themselves on the banks of the river, part-shaded by contorted mangroves. You'll then get a closer look when the safari captain driving your pontoon calls them to the side of his boat and tickles their chins. At just under a meter (3 feet) deep, the water is warm for swimming and passengers are encouraged to get in despite the crocodiles. Apparently they are the least offensive of any of their fellow species, and pay no attention to swimmers unless provoked. 🕘 ***1½hr. Black River Marina. ☎ 876-965-2513 or ☎ 876-962-0220. Trips: adults $15, children $7.50. Up to five trips daily; call ahead for times. Map p 112.***

12 ★ Pelican Bar. Looking out to sea from Parottee Point, a dot can be seen on the horizon that roughly resembles a circular hut. It belongs

Crocodile on the banks of the Black River.

Pelican Bar as seen from Parotee Point.

to Floyd who, at the dawn of the new millennium, had a dream to build a bar a mile or so offshore. His first roughly-carpentered driftwood shack was blown away by hurricane Ivan in 2004. His new and improved bar stands near a sand bank in shallow waters. A makeshift ladder of branches makes an entrance to the bar where cold drinks are served. Fish, lobster, shrimp, and conch are cooked on a rough-hewn barbecue for lunch and dinner if pre-ordered. This is an excellent place to snorkel if you have your own equipment. Arrange a boat transfer by calling Floyd or ask one of the fishermen at Treasure Beach to take you. 🕘 ***2hr. Offshore from Parottee Point. ☎ 876-354-4218 or ☎ 876-860-7277. Daily 9am–sunset.***

Responsible Tourism

Mandeville, known as the City of the South, is the headquarters of the **Countrystyle Community Tourism Network** (***☎ 876-488-7207 or ☎ 876-585-8600. www.countrystylejamaica.com***) founded in 1978 by local stalwart Diana McInytre Pike. Diana was aware that many visitors only came into contact with Jamaicans that worked at the hotels they were staying in. Eager to give tourists a taste of everyday life, she facilitates daytrips to off-the-beaten-track communities, including south-coast fishing villages and hamlets in the Blue Mountains. 'We're a nation of hardworking and hospitable people who are proud of our country and love to get the opportunity to show it off,' says Diana. She also arranges home-stays where visitors can rent a room and be hosted in Jamaican family homes.

Negril

1 Rhodes Hall Estate
2 Jamplified Recording Studios
3 Bloody Bay
4 Kool Runnings Water Park
5 Sweet Spot Restaurant & Bar
6 Long Bay
7 Taking a Cruise
8 Negril Lighthouse
9 Royal Palm Reserve
10 Savanna-la-Mar
11 Blue Hole
12 Bluefields
13 Belmont
14 Dorret's Restaurant & Bar
15 Peter Tosh Mausoleum
Beach
Dalmally
Green Island
Kingsvale
Cascade
Cash Hill
Miles Town
North Negril Point
Orange Bay
Glasgow
Pennycooke
Alexandria
Long Bay
Negril
Cave Valley
B9
Mount Grace
Chichester
B8
Grange Hill
Glen Islay
Negril Beach
Springfield
Delve Bridge
George's Plain
Friendship Cross
Haddo
B8
South Negril Point
Negril Spots
Banbury
Petersfield
Whithorn
Mount Airy
New Hope
Little London
B9
Darliston
Revival
Old Hope
A2
Ferris Cross
Broughton
Savanna-la-Mar
Bluff Point
Cave
South West Point
St. Johns Point
Bognie
Mearnsville
Bluefields
Bluefields
Bluefields Bay
New Works
Crab Pond Point
A2
Auchindown
CARIBBEAN SEA
0 3 mi
0 3 km

Rastafarians playing guitars beneath palm trees, reggae music drifting from beach bars, and rum cocktails drunk straight from coconut husks are all typical images associated with this unhurried, unpretentious resort. But just a short drive from the coast, you can lose yourself in the tranquility of the countryside. Take a series of day trips from the touristy west coast to visit bucolic hamlets and provincial towns, and you'll find that nature creates the main attractions. Here, running east to west, are just some of my favorites.
START: Negril. Tour length: Four days.

1 kids Rhodes Hall Estate. Back in the 1700s, this 222-hectare (550-acre) estate on the coast road was a thriving sugar cane plantation. When sugar was no longer profitable, bananas took its place and that was the major crop here until 1985. Now the estate has left its agricultural past behind and operates as a country park welcoming tourists. Horse riding; snorkeling the offshore reef; swimming from the private beach; and taking a nature walk are just some of the activities on offer. The estate also boasts a mangrove forest. The pond of brackish water at its center is the basking spot of around 60 crocodiles. They can be seen from a floating wooden platform that extends to the middle of the pond. Free transfers are available from Negril hotels. *2hr–full day. Orange Bay, 8km (5 miles) east of Negril. 876-957-6883. www. rhodesresort.com. From $15 entrance fee. Daily 9am–6pm. Map p 118.*

2 ★ Jamplified Recording Studios. For budding musicians and singers who want to take home more than a T-shirt of their idols, this well-equipped studio is available for hire. The professionally-trained owner-producer and his team will help you cut a record, or sing over a backing track. Session musicians are also available at a reasonable fee for those who are more serious. *At Rhodes Hall Estate, Orange Bay, 8km (5 miles) east of Negril. 876-957-6593. www. jamplified.com.*

3 ★ Bloody Bay. A perfect crescent of sand met by the cerulean Caribbean Sea, this beach is every

The beautiful Bloody Bay.

bit as beautiful (if not as expansive) as its sister, Long Bay. The waters remain shallow to the edge of the swimming area, hawkers are few, and watersports plentiful, making it an ideal stop for some seaside fun. *See p 59.*

4 ★ kids **Kool Runnings Water Park.** A fun park opposite the beach with numerous wet and dry activities aimed at entertaining children and grown ups alike. ***See p 40.***

5 **Sweet Spot Restaurant & Bar.** Local ackee and salt fish, omelets, and spicy chicken curry with rice are among the best dishes on the menu at this wooden-hut eatery. It's often busy with locals who come for the good, low-priced breakfasts and lunches. ***Norman Manley Boulevard. ☎ 876-447-2551 or ☎ 876-452-4447. $.***

6 ★ kids **Long Bay.** Negril's number one beach stretches for 11 unblemished, uninterrupted kilometers (7 miles). You can walk its length (from Bloody Bay to the cliffs and caves of the West End) and see much of the resort in the process. ***See p 60.***

7 **Taking a Cruise.** Take a coastal voyage on a catamaran from Negril's Long Bay's waterfront. Snorkeling equipment is generally provided and there are plenty of scheduled opportunities to jump into the blue and see the marine life. In addition, there are romantic and party sunset cruises. During the party cruise, you'll drop anchor beneath the spectacular cliffs of Negril's West End until nightfall; get the chance to learn to dance *soca* (an energetic dance style performed to calypso music) and reggae dance, while the rum cocktails flow and the sound system pulsates; then set sail again beneath the moonlight. Operator Wildthing Catamaran Tours have the fun addition of waterslides on their craft. ***Norman Manley Boulevard at Chances Restaurant. ☎ 876-957-9930. www.wildthingwatersportsnegril.com.***

The solar-powered lighthouse at Negril.

8 ★ Negril Lighthouse. The views from this landmark are just as satisfying as watching the light fade around it at sunset from the restaurants and bars that stretch along Negril's West End. Now powered by solar energy, this 30m (100 ft) tall historic beacon has stood here, warning ships of the outlying rocks, since 1894. Climb the 103 steps to the top of the tower to see the headland from Jamaica's most westerly point. The lighthouse keeper appreciates a small tip for showing you around. *1hr. West End Road. 876-922-0290. Admission free. Daily 9am–sunset. Map p 118.*

9 ★★ Royal Palm Reserve. At the southern end of Negril's Great Morass, a vast mangrove swamp, stands this protected wetland. Giant Royal Palms are the most memorable feature. They can grow around 30m (100 ft) high and have a life span of between 80 and 90 years. It's possible to get a closer look at their fronds by climbing the 9m (30 ft) observation tower. A boardwalk trail leads around their trunks and over a carpet of ferns and delicate flowers. Tour guides lead visitors on a 1½ -kilometer (1-mile) long circuit of the reserve naming the trees, climbing vines, ferns, birds, and wildlife as they appear. *1–2hr. Sheffield Road, south of Negril. 876-957-3736. www.royalpalmreserve.com. Admission: adults $10, children $5. Daily 9am–6pm. Map p 118.*

10 Savanna-la-Mar. The largest town on the west coast has, surprisingly, not been preened to attract tourists, despite its relative closeness to Negril. Sav, as it is most often known, was a sugar port in the 18th century. Its main street (Great George Street), market, and fort are worth a short detour for a vivid snap-shot of everyday Jamaican life.

Follow the trail of ferns, flowers and wildlife at the Royal Palm Reserve.

11 Blue Hole. Tucked away in a private garden this basin of fresh, turquoise water is fed by a subterranean spring and surrounded by flowers. It is a refreshing place to cool off with a swim, after visiting Savanna-la-Mar (see p 78). *Roaring River, nr Petersfield, south of Negril.*

12 Bluefields. One of Jamaica's few remaining uncommercialized stretches of beach. A quintessential Caribbean strand with blue waters and white sand that is not backed by shops, bars, and hotels, but a thicket of trees,it attracts those eager to get away from the tourist bustle. *See p 59.*

13 Belmont. Be sure to visit this laid-back, visually-charming fishing community. Walk beyond the functional huts and prefab cabins to the multi-colored fishing boats moored by the pier or pulled up on to the sand. Fishermen sit cleaning their catch, mending their nets, or

Get away from the tourist bustle and head for Bluefields.

preparing to head out to sea on the largely calm waters of Bluefields Bay. This is also the base for **Reliable Adventures Jamaica** who arrange boat trips across the bay to see the bird life as well as hiking trips into the hills (see p 67). 🕘 *30 min.*

14 Dorret's Restaurant & Bar. Overlooking Bluefields Bay, this may not be the prettiest restaurant in the area, but it has one of the best views from its open-sided dining room and excellent seafood. Baked crab, shrimp, and steamed fish are served with rice and peas and seasonal salad. *On the A2 east of Belmont.* ☎ *876-955-8052 or* ☎ *876-471-4984. $$.*

15 Peter Tosh Mausoleum. Brightly-painted gates lead to a peaceful, shady garden where musician and singer Peter Tosh is laid to rest in an extravagantly decorated mausoleum. With Bunny Livingston and Bob Marley, Tosh was the third member of Bob Marley and the Wailers. Tosh was born in nearby Petersfield in 1944, and died in 1987 at the hands of armed robbers who broke into his home. 🕘 *30 min. On the A2 east of Belmont. Admission $5. Daily 9am–5pm. Map p 118.*

Travel Tip

Facing west, Negril is the best place on the island to watch the sunset. No two are the same, the colors ranging from burnt orange and scarlet red to pink, purple, and lilac. Gazing at the horizon as the light fades has become a daily ritual in Negril. The pressing question is how and where you choose to spend it. A walk along Long Bay or Bloody Bay is one option, cocktail in hand at one of the West End's bars and restaurants is another. Perhaps the most pleasing, though, is watching it from a privately-hired fishing boat. Negotiate a price with the fishermen by the craft market or those that ply the beaches during the day looking for a fare. ●

The colorful Mausoleum of Peter Tosh, the third member of Bob Marley and the Wailers.

6 The Best **Resorts**

Montego Bay

Where to Stay

Breezes Rio Bueno 7
Breezes Trelawny 6
The Gloucestershire Hotel 9
Half Moon 3
Ritz Carlton Golf & Spa Resort 5
Sandals Royal Caribbean Resort 1
Sunset Beach Resort 13

Where to Dine

The Groovy Grouper 8
The Houseboat Grill 14
Jimmy Buffett's Margaritaville 10
The Native 12
Pelican Grill 11
Royal Stocks English Pub & Steakhouse 4
Scotchies 2

Previous page: The Tower Isle Hotel lobby.

Montego Bay—the closest resort to the airport—is a good choice for a long weekend if you have kids in tow, or simply want to fly and flop. The nearest beachfront hotels are just 10 minutes from Arrivals, and include some of the island's finest. Mo' Bay is also the place for an action-packed vacation. Its celebrated thoroughfare of shops, bars, and restaurants—the 'Hip Strip'—ensures that Mo' Bay rarely sleeps.

Where to **Stay**

★ **Breezes Rio Bueno** RIO BUENO The most up-scale and aesthetically-pleasing property of this mid-range hotel chain. Accommodation is in colonial-themed, low-rise blocks that lead off from a Georgian-style village of shops, bars, and restaurants. This doubles as a piazza for romantic alfresco dining at night. The pool has a swim-up bar and faces a very private stretch of white sandy beach (with a clothing optional area). There's also a 9-hole golf course and a first-rate spa (see p 31). ***North Coast Highway, Rio Bueno. ☎ 876-954-0000. www.breezes.com. 226 units. Doubles $278–326. AE, DC, MC, V. Map p 124.***

★ kids **Breezes Trelawny** FALMOUTH Despite having 349 rooms this resort has a surprisingly intimate feel. The rooms are a good size and cheery with primary-colored pictures and furnishings. Ask for one of the garden cottages, as they are closest to the pool and beach. Child care and kids' clubs run every day for 6-month-old infants to teenagers. Tennis courts, pools, a rock-climbing wall, and circus workshops are among the activities that keep youngsters active and occupied. ***North Coast Highway, Falmouth. ☎ 876-954-2450. www.breezes.com. 349 units. Doubles $180–198. AE, DC, MC, V. Map p 124.***

★ **The Gloucestershire Hotel** TOWN CENTER This is a good budget option for young travelers, and for those who enjoy swapping travel

Colonial-styled accommodation at Breezes Rio Bueno.

Shopping

Montego Bay has some of the most relaxing places to shop on the island, including **The Shoppes at Rose Hall** and **Half Moon Shopping Village,** which sell duty-free, luxury goods, and souvenirs in courtyard settings. Here you can browse or window shop in peace without over-eager street vendors trying to attract your attention. At the opposite end of the scale is the **Craft Market** at Harbour Street. This sprawl of stalls, manned by local traders, sells a mix of trinkets and keep-sakes with a Caribbean theme. The best days to visit are when a cruise ship is in port—the more shoppers there are, the fewer pressure sales you will be subjected to. There are bargains to be had if you remain assertive, patient, and keep your sense of humor. By making purchases here you also help to inject much-needed tourist dollars into the local economy. The stores that line the **Hip Strip** offer a more relaxing shopping experience, but still with plenty of local flavor. The shops at **Sangster International Airport** shouldn't be overlooked either. The variety and quality of merchandise has improved dramatically in recent years, and includes coffee, sauces, rum, T-shirts, scented candles, and wood carvings. The prices are competitive, the experience hassle-free, and—best of all—you don't have to squeeze your purchases into your packed luggage.

tales and tips with fellow guests in the Jacuzzi hot tub and hotel bar. It's centrally located on the Hip Strip, opposite Doctor's Cave Beach, just moments from the shops and bars. Choose from a room overlooking the garden and pool or the ocean and Hip Strip. Each has a private balcony and, although the decor is a little dated, they are comfortable and air-conditioned.***Gloucester Avenue, Montego Bay. ☎ 876-953-2231.***

Breezes Trelawny.

88 units. Doubles $120–150. MC, V. Map p 124.

★ kids **Half Moon** ROSE HALL A destination in itself, this 400-acre property of hotel rooms, villas, and cottages has two miles of white-sand beach to offer as well as 51 swimming pools, a golf course, four squash courts,13 tennis courts, six restaurants, and seven bars. Golf carts are on hand to carry guests between the amenities. *Rose Hall, North Coast Highway. ☎ 876-953-2211. www.halfmoon.com. 398 units. Doubles $250–400. AE, DC, MC, V. Map p 124.*

★★★ **Ritz Carlton Golf & Spa Resort** This grand hotel exudes opulence and grandeur with its vividly-colored public areas and imposing artwork. The hotel itself resembles a Great House with rooms extending from the main building in matching white-washed blocks. Beautiful formal gardens with pristine lawns border the curvaceous pool. The service is exceptional and the food excellent. The only drawback is the beaches: one is very small and the other not suitable for swimming due to the breaking waves. *Rose Hall, North Coast Highway. ☎ 876-953-2800. www.ritzcarlton.com. 427 units. Doubles $119–509. AE, DC, MC, V. Map p 124.*

★ **Sandals Royal Caribbean Resort** MAHOE BAY If you're looking for a smart and peaceful get-away-from-it-all vacation, this is the resort for you, with its serene beach, offshore island, and attractive landscaped gardens. Most likely to appeal to romantics, young and old, and popular with honeymooners, the all-inclusive package features breakfast in bed in your stylish colonial-style room, and the option to take dinner on your private terrace or balcony. Beach parties, cocktail receptions, and casino evenings add a touch of glitz. *Mahoe Bay, off North Coast Highway. ☎ 876-953-2231. www.sandals.com. 197 units. Doubles $360–420 all-inclusive. AE, DC, MC, V. Map p 124.*

kids **Sunset Beach Resort** FREEPORT This is a busy, bustling resort and not for those seeking a quiet escape, although it is located on a secluded peninsula on the outskirts of town. It is, however, ideal for families with young children as there are three protected, shallow beaches; a pirate-themed waterpark; paddle boats; and mini golf. Kids' clubs entertain 2–12 year-olds, and there is a separate program of activities for teens. The rooms are generally a good size, with some accommodations next to the beach. *Sunset Drive, Freeport, Montego Bay. ☎ 876-979-8800. www.sunsetbeachresort.com. 430 units. Doubles $280–340 all-inclusive. AE, MC, V. Map p 124.*

Where to **Dine**

The Groovy Grouper DOCTOR'S CAVE BEACH *INTERNATIONAL* Right on Doctor's Cave Beach, this cafe offers a bare-foot dining experience. Waitresses will come and take your order as you laze on your towel or deck chair. Either eat while still sunning yourself on the sands, or move to the colorful tables shaded by sturdy umbrellas when your food is ready. Conch fritters, burgers, pasta, and ribs are the order of the day. For something sweet, try the tasty Key lime pie. *Doctor's Cave Beach, Gloucester Avenue. ☎ 876-952-1827. Mains*

$9–26.No credit cards. Daily 10am–10pm. Map p 124.

★★ **The Houseboat Grill** FREEPORT *INTERNATIONAL* By far the most unique and consistently good place to eat in town. Moored in the Bogue Lagoon at Freeport, this floating restaurant resembles a wooden river boat from the Deep South. It's reached by a mini ferry pushed by hand over the short crossing by an agile boatman. Dine on the top deck beneath the stars with views of the plush villas dotted across the surrounding hills, or in the nautical-themed lower deck beside a pool of live lobsters. The menu draws its influences from across the globe. Rum-glazed chicken with grilled bok choy and crispy noodles, and the delectable warm banana cake with *crème Anglaise* are excellent. The smart, top-deck bar with its laid-back atmosphere is the place to idle over a sundowner. ***Southern Cross Boulevard, Freeport, Montego Bay. ☎ 876-979-8845. www.thehouseboatgrill.com. Mains $13–30. MC, V. Daily 4.30pm–11pm. Map p 124.***

★ kids **Jimmy Buffett's Margaritaville** GLOUCESTER AVENUE *INTERNATIONAL* Expect a sociable and welcoming atmosphere at the Mo' Bay branch of this popular restaurant chain. Right on the water's edge, you can relax on the sun terrace and admire its sweeping views; slip into the blue via a water slide; bounce on the offshore trampolines, or just take a swim between courses. The Jamaican rum BBQ ribs are to be recommended as is the mango cheesecake. There is also a low-price menu and puzzle sheets for kids. A diverse selection of rock, pop, hip-hop, and soul music plays throughout the day. After 10pm the restaurant becomes a club and is one of the most popular places in town to dance the night away. *Gloucester Avenue, Montego Bay. ☎ 876-952-4777. www.margaritaville.com. Mains $10–19. AE, MC, V. Daily 11am–2am, 5am at weekends. Food served until 10pm. Map p 124.*

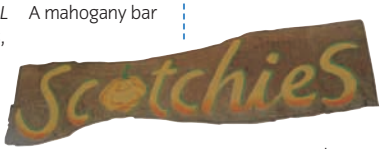
★ **The Native** GLOUCESTER AVENUE *INTERNATIONAL/JAMAICAN* Nouveau cuisine style Jamaican seafood and meat dishes are presented with flair and finesse at this garden restaurant with great views of the Hip Strip. The service can be a little slow but the staff are good humored and chatty. ***29 Gloucester Avenue, Montego Bay. ☎ 876-979-2769. Mains $12–35. AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 7.30am–10.30pm. Map p 124.***

★ **Pelican Grill** GLOUCESTER AVENUE *JAMAICAN* This smart, spacious, family-friendly diner-style restaurant is my favorite restaurant on the Hip Strip and one that offers visitors a genuinely Jamaican experience. The Pelican attracts customers seeking anything from a quick snack to a celebratory meal. Sit in the main dining area, all faux-leather semi-circular seating and wood paneling, or at the counter, where a TV

The family-friendly Pelican Grill.

is constantly on the sports channel. Dine on omelets, club sandwiches, escovitched fish, or oxtail washed down with a malted milkshake or strawberry daiquiri. The coconut cream pie is to die for. ***Gloucester Avenue, Montego Bay. ☎ 876-952-3171. Mains $4–30. AE, MC, V. Daily 7am–11pm. Map p 124.***

Royal Stocks English Pub & Steakhouse HALF MOON *BRITISH/INTERNATIONAL* A mahogany bar serving real ales, a dart board, and table-top football set the tone for this English-pub style eatery. Robust classics including fish and chips and cottage pie are on the menu alongside sandwiches and salads that also have a British theme. ***Half Moon Shopping Village, North Coast Highway (11km/7 miles east of Montego Bay). ☎ 876-953-9770 or ☎ 876-953-9771. www.theroyalstocks.com. Mains $9–27. AE, MC, V. Daily Noon–10pm. Map p 124.***



Taste delicious jerk dishes at Scotchies.

Scotchies EAST OF TOWN *FAST FOOD/JAMAICAN* Not as inviting a setting as its Ocho Rios counterpart (see p 129) but nevertheless this jerk joint serves the best, highly-spiced chicken, pork, fish, and sausage in town—all washed down with a cool Jamaican Red Stripe beer. ***Opposite the Holiday Inn, on route A1 (North Coast Highway) east of Downtown. ☎ 876-953-3301 or ☎ 876-953-8041. Mains $3–15. Daily 11am–11pm. Map p 124.***

Nightlife

At sundown the neon lights on Gloucester Avenue flicker into life and the 'Hip Strip' turns into the see-and-be-seen party zone that its name suggests, where Jamaicans and tourists mingle in the bars and clubs. **Margaritaville** (☎ 876-952-4777, www.margaritaville.com) is at the center of the action with DJs cranking up the volume and entertaining the twenty-something crowd into the small hours. The neighboring **Blue Beat** (☎ 876-952-9609) jazz and blues club has live acts, sophisticated cocktails, slick decor, and table service. It attracts a smartly-dressed, middle-aged crowd. Across the street there are 120 slot machines to play, live music, and cabaret shows at the **Coral Cliff Gaming Lounge** (☎ 876-952-4130, www.coralcliffjamaica.com). The rum punch is on the house for those playing for the jackpots of up to $50,000. Just a couple of miles out of town, on the waterfront at Howard Cooke Boulevard, is **Pier 1** (☎ 876-952-2452, www.pieronejamaica.com), another fun place to hang out. The venue's boardwalk pier, stretching out into the harbor, is one of the best places to watch the sunset while enjoying the week-day happy hour. The entertainment program includes open mic nights, DJs, bands, and performers.

Where to Stay

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Couples Tower Isle 17
Jamaica Inn 13
Rooms on the Beach 3
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Devon House I-scream 5
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Juici Patties 6
Miss T's 8
Passage to India 4
Scotchies Too 14
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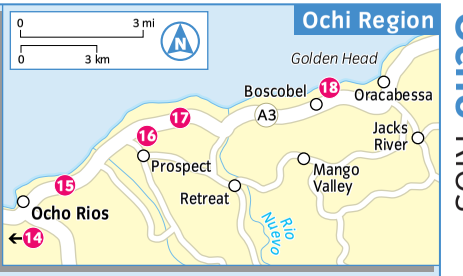

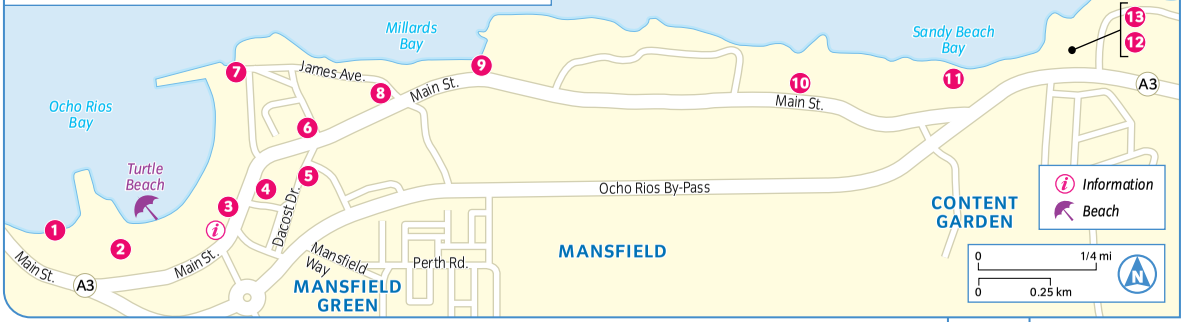

This one-time fishing village has grown into a well-organized tourist hub, thanks to its proximity to Dunn's River Falls and various other big attractions. 'Ochi' therefore makes an ideal base for those seeking a taste of Jamaica beyond the beaches as well as enjoying a sun, sea, and sand vacation. Most hotels are geared towards couples or families and, when a cruise ship is in port, the town center is especially lively.

Where to **Stay**

★★ kids **Beaches Boscobel** OCHO RIOS From the family brand of the Sandals' chain, a full program of daily activities ensures the kids are entertained from dawn until dusk. Fast food, unlimited ice cream, and non-alcoholic cocktails are on tap throughout the day for minors. A friendly, energetic team staffs the water park, Xbox room, kids' club, and teen disco. Twelve room categories range from spacious suites to smaller family rooms. *North Coast Highway, St Ann's Bay. ☎ 876-975-7777. www.beaches.com. 223 units. Doubles $360–440. AE, DC, MC, V. Map p 130.*

★★★ **Couples Tower Isle** OCHO RIOS This hotel was the first all-inclusive in Jamaica, with chic minimalist rooms housed in a sleek and curvaceous white-washed Art Deco-style building facing the ocean. Opened in 1949 by Abe Issa, founding father of the Couples hotel group, it quickly became the preferred hang-out for the Hollywood elite of the 1950s. Lena Horne, Errol Flynn, Louis Armstrong, Eva Gabor, Walt Disney, Noel Coward, and Joey Brown have all graced the piano bar. Now, after a complete refurbishment in 2009, Tower Isle manages to embody all the glitz and

The glamorous Couple Tower Hotel was a popular hang-out for the Hollywood elite in the 1950s.

Elegant furnishings at Jamaica Inn.

glamour of the 50s era while providing all the trappings of a top-end all-inclusive. Unlimited golf at the Sandals Golf and Country Club (see p 87), a horseback ride, catamaran cruise, and day trip to Dunn's River Falls are among the inclusions. ***North Coast Highway, ☎ 876-975-4271. www.couples.com. 226 units. Doubles $274–358 all-inclusive. AE, DC, MC, V. Map p 130.***

★★★ **Jamaica Inn** OCHO RIOS The colonial splendor and exclusive feel of this property transport you back to a time when travel was a privilege for the chosen few. The attention to detail, lack of TVs, croquet lawn, and daily afternoon tea give a sense that everything is as it should be, while the courteous staff create a genteel, but non-fusty atmosphere. A horse-shoe of suites, painted lilac blue, is set in gardens that meet a beach of pure white sand. Interiors are elegantly furnished with dark wood and crisp white linens. There are also six capacious cottages built on a private bluff, five of which come complete with plunge pools and direct access to the ocean. ***Main Street. ☎ 876-974-2514. www.jamaicainn.com. 53 units. Doubles $310–590. AE, DC, MC, V. Map p 130.***

★ **Rooms on the Beach** OCHO RIOS Just steps away from the town's restaurants, bars, and shops this is a great value option for those who prefer to dine locally rather than go all-inclusive. Accommodation is clean, comfortable, and spacious and amenities include a pool and laundry room. ***Main Street. ☎ 876-974-6632. www.roomresorts.com. 99 units. Doubles $90–100 w/breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Map p 130.***

★★ **Royal Plantation** OCHO RIOS Set on a bluff and with a small and secluded beach, this inn enjoys delightful ocean views. The palatial entrance, grand staircase, classic furnishings, striking artwork, and a monochrome tiled lobby evoke a sense of opulence. Some rooms are compact, but the linens and marble bathrooms are luxurious. ***Main Street. ☎ 876-974-5601. www.royalplantation.com. 74 units. Doubles $325–545 all-inclusive. AE, DC, MC, V. Map p 130.***

Shopping

The typically unhurried pace of Jamaican life does not apply to shopping in Ochi. Be prepared to roll up your sleeves and barter. Street vendors, stallholders in the craft market, and even some shopkeepers can be very pushy as they try to lure you towards their merchandise. **Island Village Shopping Centre** is the most civilized and least tiring place to indulge in a little retail therapy. Shopping plazas—some a little scruffy, others glitzy and inviting—line Main Street. All have their hidden gems. **Soni's Plaza** (50 Main Street) is the most pleasant to walk around, and also has the best mix of interesting duty-free and gift shops. The smart **Taj Mahal Shopping Centre** (behind the Hard Rock Cafe) also has a good selection of duty-free watches and jewelry. The most entertaining places to buy souvenirs, thanks to the animated salespeople, are the **Ocho Rios Craft Park** and the smaller **Old Craft Market.** Both are on Main Street and are an excellent source for local handicrafts, paintings, and carvings.

★ **Sandals Grande Ocho Rios Beach & Villa Golf Resort** OCHO RIOS Fun, young, and lively with excellent sports facilities and a huge swimming pool, this extensive, all-inclusive resort begins at the sea and rises into the hills. A wide range of accommodation types are on offer including private villas with butler service, hillside apartments with shared pools, and—my favorites—the sea-view hotel rooms, which are closest to the beach and well placed for the resort's amenities as well as having great views. *Main Street.* ☎ *876-974-2691. www.sandals.com. 529 units. Doubles $320–400 all-inclusive. AE, DC, MC, V. Map p 130.*

★ kids **Sunset Jamaica Grande Resort & Spa** OCHO RIOS This well-run, four-star, all-inclusive hotel, painted a cheery two-tone yellow, is so prominent it has become an Ocho Rios landmark. It is set in the heart of Ochi's shopping district and occupies the lion's share of Mallard's Beach—the resort's main stretch of sand. It is also home to the best nightclub in town and a reputable spa. The hotel has a kids' club that caters for 2–13 year-olds, five themed pools, and a man-made waterfall designed to resemble the Dunn's River Falls nearby. Food is of a high standard and the Chinese restaurant exceptional. The majority of rooms have sea views and the decor is bright and simple. *Main Street.* ☎ *876-974-2200. www.sunsetjamaicagrande.com. 730 units. Doubles $320–450. AE, DC, MC, V. Map p 130.*

Where to **Dine**

Bibibips TOWN CENTER *INTERNATIONAL/JAMAICAN* A casual-dining, cliff-top restaurant and bar with a breeze-cooled terrace and bird's-eye

view of bustling Mahogany Beach. Great for people-watching over a lunchtime salad, sandwich, or burger. For supper there's seafood Jamaican-style, curried shrimp with rice and peas, and grilled snapper topped with crabmeat. ***Main Street. ☎ 876-974-8759. Entrees $8–25. AE, MC, V. Daily 11am–midnight. Map p 130.***

Devon House I-scream TOWN CENTER *ICE CREAM* The island's most deliciously creamy ice cream is served at this pint-sized parlor. Staff let you taste test before you buy, and varieties include pina colada and fruit-and-nut. ***Millford Road. Scoop $1.No credit cards. Daily 10am–7pm. Map p 130.***

The Dinner Terrace at Jamaica Inn MAIN STREET *INTERNATIONAL* Ochi's preeminent restaurant is the perfect place to celebrate a special occasion. Classic dishes are created with aplomb from the finest ingredients. ***See p 130.***

kids **Hard Rock Cafe** TOWN CENTER *INTERNATIONAL* A familiar favorite with a Jamaican twist thanks to the Bob Marley memorabilia on display. Tex-Mex staples, juicy burgers, ribs, and ice cold sodas are a welcome respite after pounding the downtown pavements. ***45 Main Street (at the Taj Mahal Shopping Centre). ☎ 876-974-3333. Mains $12–30. AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 11am–11pm. Map p 130.***

kids **Jimmy Buffett's Margaritaville** ISLAND VILLAGE *AMERICAN/CARIBBEAN* This lively beachfront restaurant and bar in Ochi's chicest shopping mall serves juicy cheeseburgers, deep-fried, coconut-battered shrimps, and exotically-flavored margaritas to write home about. With the volume cranked up for reggae, rock, and pop classics, a swimming pool, waterslide, and roof-top hot tub, let the good times roll. ***Turtle Beach Road. ☎ 876-675-8976. Entrees $7–22. AE, DC, MC, V. Restaurant daily 8am–11pm, bar until 5am. Map p 130.***

Juici Patties TOWN CENTER *BAKERY* The service may be on the slow side and a little chaotic, but the patties served here represent the best in Jamaican fast food. Piping hot, rich, and savory soya, chicken, and beef fillings in flaky pastry make for a great snack and cost around $1. ***Main Street (opposite the clock tower). No credit cards. Daily 10am–7pm. Map p 130.***

Miss T's TOWN CENTER *MODERN JAMAICAN* A hip and trendy bistro, with a garden that provides a laid-back oasis, just off Ochi's frenetic Main Street. The menu offers a lighter version of well-known Jamaican dishes, including ackee and salted mackerel, instead of the more usual cod fish for breakfast. For lunch and dinner, try oxtail, the skewered plantain and jerk shrimp with mango salsa, or seafood pasta with a coconut sauce. ***65 Main Street (set back from the road). ☎ 876-795-0099. Mains $6–24. AE, MC, V. Daily 7.30am–10pm. Map p 130.***

Passage to India TOWN CENTER *INDIAN* High-quality Indian meat, fish, and vegetable curries are cooked to order and served on a pleasant, covered terrace overlooking Ochi's town center. ***See p 130.***

Scotchies Too DRAX HALL *JAMAICAN* My favorite jerk joint in the country. Order at the hatch, head down to the kitchen—an open jerk pit where the meat is barbecued—and watch your chosen cut of chicken or pork being prepared. Take some extra-hot, fiery sauce on the side—if you dare—and complete your snack with a festival (cigar-shaped savory donut), slice of breadfruit, or yam, all to be enjoyed in the eatery's garden. Simple perfection. ***On route A3 (5.5km/ 3.5***

Toscanini's authentic Italian dining is praised by top chefs and politicians.

miles west of Ochi at Drax Hall junction). ☎ *876-794-9457. Mains $3–15.AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 11am–11pm. Map p 130.*

kids **Spring Garden Café & Seafood Grill** NORTH COAST HIGHWAY *JAMAICAN/INTERNATIONAL* This friendly roadside family restaurant just outside town excels at inventive fish and shrimp dishes. Two of the most popular are coconut-fried fish fillet and Jamaican 'Viagra' (a combination of conch and scallops smothered in hot jerk sauce then cooked in foil). Eat on the outdoor patio and bar area or inside the dark-wood dining room, cooled by air-conditioning. ***Main Street (near the bypass), Ocho Rios.*** ☎ ***876-795-3149. Mains $8–29. MC, V. Daily 11am–11pm. Map p 130.***

Toscanini's TOWER ISLE *ITALIAN* Set on the lawns and ground floor of the elegant Harmony Hall (see p. 98), this authentic Italian restaurant sources the finest imported ingredients and produce from local farmers to create a range of classic Italian dishes, some with a Jamaican twist. Start with homemade pasta or focaccia, then try the signature garlic lobster dish or pimento-roasted loin of pork with honey balsamic glaze. I particularly love the home-baked profiteroles served with Swiss chocolate sauce. The restaurant has been frequented by former US president Clinton and his family, former British Prime Minister John Major, and celebrity chef Marco Pierre White, who all sing its praises in the guest book. ***See p. 130.***

Nightlife

A few options around the resort center are tourist-friendly. **Margaritaville** (in the Island Village Shopping Centre, ☎ 876-675-8976) is always a good bet, with a range of music to suit all tastes played until around 2am on busy nights. **Amnesia** (70 Main Street, ☎ 876-904-2633) has more of a Jamaican flavor, and can become more hedonistic as the evening progresses and especially at weekends. The classiest option is the **Jamaica'n Me Crazy** nightclub at Sunset Jamaica Grande (Main Street, ☎ ***876-974-2200***) which welcomes non-guests off-season for a fee.

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1 mi
0
1 km
CARIBBEAN SEA
Burnetts Point
Pegg Point
Trident Castle
Turtle Crawle Harbour
Cocoa Walk Bay
Cold Harbour
Alligator Head
Frenchman's Cove Beach
Unity Bay
Pellew Island
Lime Kiln Bay
Fairy Hill Bay
A4
DRAPERS
WILLIAMSFIELD
FAIRY HILL
BOSTON BAY
Boston Beach
Boston Bay
Place of Interest
Beach
Athenry Gardens & Nonsuch Caves
Where to Stay
Drapers San Guest House 4
Gee Jam 7
Goblin Hill Villas 8
Hotel Mockingbird Hill 5
Ivanhoe's 1
Where to Dine
Boston Bay Jerk Centre 10
Cynthia's 9
Mille Fleurs 6
Norma's at the Marina 2
Woody's 3

In the late 19th century, Port Antonio received its first tourists. They came aboard the banana ships that plied between the Jamaican port and the east coast of America. The town enjoyed its second heyday in the 1950s when Errol Flynn discovered it, and the Hollywood set including Truman Capote, Bette Davis, and Ginger Rogers vacationed here. Today, it attracts discerning travelers of all budgets who prefer to escape the tourist crowds of the big resorts.

Where to **Stay**

Drapers San Guest House DRAPERS VILLAGE This is an ideal choice for the young and young-at-heart on a budget. The brightly-painted apartment building is part Italianate in style and part inspired by the Rastafarian colors of green, gold, and red. It is sparsely furnished but homely, and some rooms have shared bathrooms. However, it is conveniently close to the area's best beaches. The atmosphere is upbeat and sociable, with guests encouraged to dine together. ***Drapers Village, Port Antonio. ☎ 876-993-7118. 7 units. Doubles $58–76. No credit cards (Jamaican $, US$ and € accepted). Map p 136.***

Gee Jam SAN SAN The accommodation of choice for visiting celebrities, a collection of wooden cabins tucked into small clearings in a rainforest glade that rises from the coast. Each is completely private with only a discrete pathway cut through ferns, linking dwellings to the rest of the resort, the viewing deck, pool table, restaurant, and bar area. Funky, contemporary pieces furnish the white-washed bedrooms and ultra-modern bathrooms. State-of-the-art audio-visual gadgets come as standard, and guests are also entitled to make use of the recording studio on site (see p. 43). ***San San, Port Antonio. ☎ 876-946-1958. www.geejamhotel.com. 5 units. Doubles $495–595 w/breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Map p 136.***

★ kids **Goblin Hill Villas** SAN SAN A good choice for families who want to set their own schedule for meal times. Either opt to self cater or staff will prepare meals for you at no extra cost in the well-equipped kitchens. The Georgian-inspired villas look out onto extensive lawns and there is a shared pool framed by a bower of trailing vines and tropical flowers. Steps lead down to San San beach and within the grounds are two floodlit tennis courts. ***San San. ☎ 876-925-8108 or ☎ 876-993-7443. www.goblinhillvillas.com. 20 units. Villas $135–235 per night including cook, food extra. AE, MC, V. Map p 136.***

★★ **Hotel Mockingbird Hill** DRAPERS Emerging from

Hotel Mockingbird Hill.

Ivanhoe's guest house.

a flourishing garden and enjoying panoramic views of Port Antonio, this is an exquisite, tastefully-furnished and immaculately-maintained eco-friendly hotel. The staff is efficient and attentive, and the owners offer a range of personalized tours for those who wish to interact with local Jamaicans and explore the surrounding countryside. Spacious rooms with large, comfy beds have ceiling fans instead of air-conditioning and bathrooms with showers only, in keeping with the hotel's green philosophy. I also highly recommend the restaurant Mille Fleurs (see below). ***Port Antonio. ☎ 876-993-7134 or ☎ 876-993-7267. www.hotelmockingbirdhill.com.10 units. Doubles $195–550. MC, V. Map p 136.***

★★ **Ivanhoe's** PORT ANTONIO A light and airy guest house in a quiet residential neighborhood within walking distance of Port Antonio's town center and harbor. Some rooms have small terraces and views of the marina. Furnishings are 60s retro-Caribbean style and the rooms, though often small, are scrupulously clean and very charming. Members of staff are eager to help you explore the resort and welcome you like a visiting relative. ***9 Queen Street, Port Antonio. ☎ 876-993-3042 or ☎ 876-993-3043. 12 units. Doubles $40–60. No credit cards; payment by cash and travelers' checks only. Map p 136.***

Where to **Dine**

Boston Bay Jerk Centre BOSTON BAY *JAMAICAN* The most local and colorful place to pick up lunch or dinner to-go in the area. This group of roadside stalls is shrouded in smoke that fills the air with a heady aroma of spices as locals cook up pit-roasted jerk chicken and pork from morning until night. ***See p 51.***

Cynthia's WINNIFRED'S BEACH *SEAFOOD* It may be just a beach shack that serves lunch from a kitchen of corrugated zinc, but Cynthia and her cooks pride themselves on their tasty fried fish, griddled chicken, and rice and peas. Lobster, when in season and when available, is the item to order. It's sold to Cynthia by a passing fisherman and grilled to perfection. Cynthia runs a tight ship and provides service with a smile. She is also on hand to offer tips about the local area and enjoys sharing tit-bits of local gossip. ***Winnifred's Beach, Port Antonio. Mains $8–25.No credit cards. Daily 11am–6pm. Map p 136.***

Mille Fleurs DRAPERS *CARIBBEAN/MEDITERRANEAN* This sophisticated, hillside restaurant is as romantic as it is good value. Enjoy honey, soya-glazed chicken wings, home-made pasta, and mahi mahi in a creamy passion-fruit sauce while watching the light fade over Port Antonio and its environs. ***Port***

Antonio. ☎ 876-993-7134 or ☎ 876-993-7267. www.hotelmockingbirdhill.com. Mains $23–45. MC, V. Daily 7pm–9.30pm. Map p 136.

★ **Norma's at the Marina** HARBOR *INTERNATIONAL/JAMAICAN* The sister restaurant to the celebrated Norma's on the Terrace at Devon House in Kingston (see p 150). Jamaica's greatest chef, Norma Shirley, has once again chosen a wonderful location to present her imaginative, delicately-flavored, and dependably-good food. Tables shaded by parasols edge a small, but perfectly-formed beach at the exclusive Errol Flynn Marina. Try the smoked marlin salad with capers, mustard and citrus segments; teriyaki strip loin steak, and the unmissable moist, intense rum cake at this high-end restaurant. ***Ken Wright Pier, West Harbour. ☎ 876-993-9510. www.normasatthemarina.com. Mains $10–45. MC, V. Tues–Sat 11am–10pm. Sun 11am–6pm. Map p 136.***

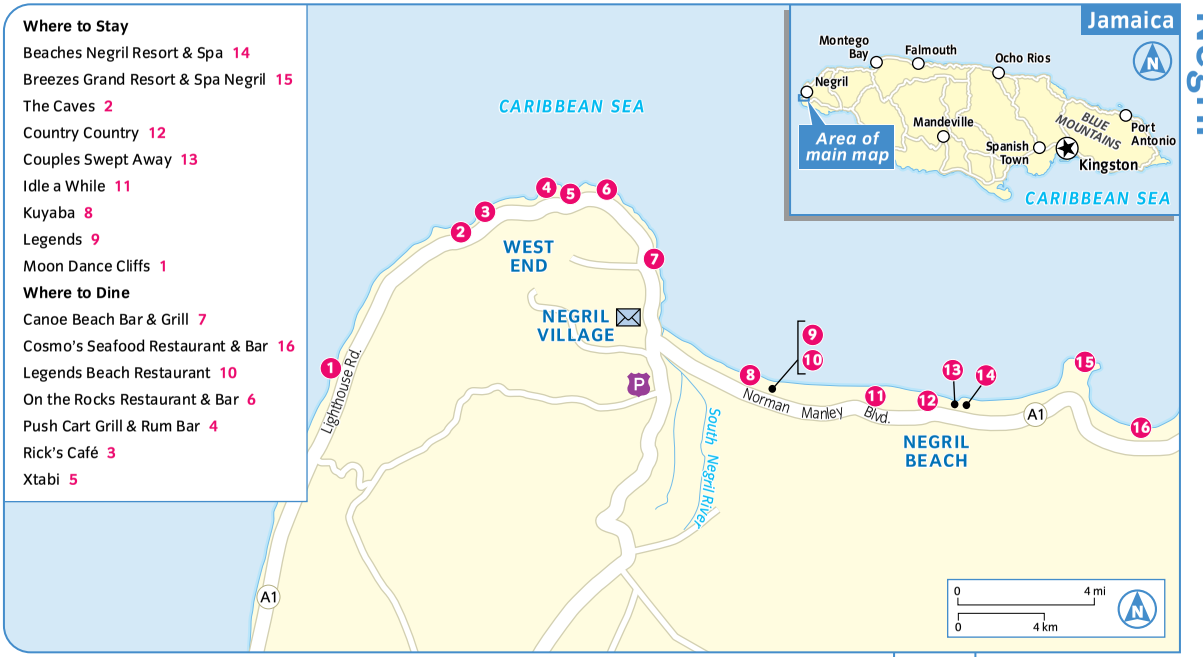
★★ kids **Woody's** DRAPERS *INTERNATIONAL* Few would contest that Woody's serves up the best burgers in Jamaica. However, this is not a fast-food eatery. Everything is made from scratch with fresh, local ingredients which takes time, but the meal is always worth the wait. Hearty three-course meals with fish, chicken, or steak mains are also served in the evenings in a garden setting. These must be booked in advance. It is also advisable to call ahead if planning to dine late evening as the restaurant sometimes closes early, if business is slow. ***Drapers Village, Port Antonio. ☎ 876-993-7888. Mains $4–15. No credit cards. Daily 10am–10pm. Map p 136.***

Norma's at the Marina.

Port Antonio Waterfront

A world away from the hubbub of Port Antonio's hectic center, the upscale Errol Flynn Marina is set behind white, wrought-iron gates (☎ 876-715-6044 or ☎ 876-993-3209 www.errolflynnmarina.com). This affluent enclave hugs the town's sheltered harbor, with its jetties of motor cruisers and slinky yachts moored in the glassy blue waters. This is the smartest place in Port Antonio to enjoy cocktails at sunset. It is also the best place in town to buy gifts and gourmet goods, sold by the handful of port-side specialty shops.

Errol Flynn Marina.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Falmouth
Ocho Rios
Negril
Mandeville
Spanish Town
BLUE MOUNTAINS
Port Antonio
Kingston
Area of main map
CARIBBEAN SEA
0 4 mi
0 4 km

If the thought of lying on a quintessential Caribbean strand has lured you to Jamaica, then Negril has two. Long Bay stretches for 11 palm-fringed kilometers (7 miles) of white sand and shallow, blue water. It nudges up to the equally beautiful Bloody Bay. The beaches end at a rocky headland to the west known as the West End, where people gather in the restaurants, bars, and hotels clinging to its cliffside to watch the finest sunsets in Jamaica. Quiet days on the beach contrast with nights of entertainment on the same sands. The resort has the best live music outside of Kingston.

Where to **Stay**

kids **Beaches Negril Resort & Spa** BLOODY BAY The best all-inclusive choice for families in town, with feature swimming pools, its own waterpark, and a choice slice of beach. Face painting, shell collecting, and Sesame Street characters entertain younger visitors. Teens can play in the air-conditioned Xbox 360 games room, and have their own entertainment program which includes boat cruises, talent shows, and karaoke nights. ***Norman Manley Boulevard. ☎ 876-957-9270. www.sandals.com. 200 units. Doubles $380–467. AE, DC, MC, V. Map p 140.***

Breezes Grand Resort & Spa Negril BLOODY BAY This extensive, all-inclusive resort is both stylish and casual and most suitable for couples or groups of friends. No children under 16 are allowed. Most rooms stretch the length of its beachfront and enjoy sea views while others are in a quieter garden location. There are two sections of beach to enjoy: one is a rocky cove with trees lining the water's edge, the other is a long and sandy stretch at the western end of the magnificent Bloody Bay. Entertainment is upbeat, with pool-side games and interactive stage shows taking place in the central pavilion throughout the day. There is a buffet restaurant and five specialty eateries. Food is of a good standard if a little unimaginative. Rooms have a Mediterranean meets North American

Platforms for sunbathers at the Caves

feel. ***Norman Manley Boulevard. ☎ 876-957-5010. www.breezes.com. 210 units. Doubles $302–350. AE, DC, MC, V. Map p 140.***

The Caves WEST END A collection of rustic-chic beach cottages stands on the curving cliff top at this charming property. There are platforms for sunbathing dotted throughout the site and steps leading down into the water for swimming. The top-notch restaurant is on a raised deck that enjoys sweeping views of the West End. The spa is also one of the best in town (see p. 32). ***West End Road ☎ 876-946-1958. www.islandoutpost.com. 13 units. Doubles $425–610 (full board). AE, DC, MC, V. Map p 140.***

★★★ **Country Country** LONG BAY In a garden setting by the sea, this cluster of gingerbread-style Caribbean beach houses, painted in warm tones, is tucked behind flurries of ferns and flowers. They were crafted by celebrated Jamaican architect Anne Hodges who designed the exclusive Strawberry Hill. Each accommodation has its own wooden-deck verandah. Interiors are unfussy, comfortable, and come with air-conditioning and TV. This is a Negril gem. ***Norman Manley Bolulevard. ☎ 876-957-4273 or ☎ 876-957-9136. www.countryjamaica.com. 20 units. Doubles $150–180 w/breakfast. AE, MC, V. Map p 140.***

★★★ **Couples Swept Away** LONG BAY This resort is ideal for sporty types. As well as commanding a beautiful stretch of Long Bay, it has a 10-acre sports complex featuring a 25-meter (82-foot) lap pool, 10 tennis courts, state-of-the-art gym, jogging trail, squash and racquetball courts, and a daily program of fitness classes. The food served in the six restaurants is excellent, in particular at the authentic Lemongrass Thai. Accommodation is set in two-story, villa-style blocks encircled by lush tropical gardens and ponds. Rooms have large balconies or terraces, some with hammocks, and the interiors have a tropical, safari-like feel. Unlimited golf at Negril Hills and scuba-diving courses are included in the tariff. ***Norman Manley Boulevard. ☎ 876-957-4061. www.couples.com. 312 units. Doubles $334–416. AE, DC, MC, V. Map p 140.***

★ **Idle a While** LONG BAY A boutique hotel set just back from the beach in quiet, landscaped grounds. Rooms are chic and luxurious with wooden ceilings and elegant shutters enhanced by vibrantly-colored floor tiles and soft furnishings. Guests also get free use of the sports complex at Couples Swept Away resort. ***Norman Manley Boulevard. ☎ 876-957-9566 or ☎ 876-957-3303. www.idleawhile.com. 14 units. Doubles $130–210. AE, MC, V. Map p 140.***

★★ **Kuyaba** LONG BAY The rooms at this beachfront property are arty, rustic, and romantic. Set back from the sand in a jungle-like

Beach-house style accommodation at Country Country.

Shopping

Whether you want to bring something home from Jamaica that costs just a few dollars or really splash out, Negril has gifts to suit all budgets. There are two craft markets selling ethnic goods: **Rutland Craft Market** on Norman Manley Boulevard behind Bloody Bay; and **Negril Craft Market** near the center of town beside the river. You'll find the shops in wooden huts along the roadside in the West End also have unusual handicraft bargains. The best duty-free stores can be found at **Time Square** on Norman Manley Boulevard.

garden they have their own private verandah with hammock chair screened by palm trees. Set in two-story Iberian-style buildings, their interiors are painted in cool, neutral colors and have tiled floors, sturdy wooden furniture, and French doors. There are also simple, brightly-painted wooden cottages to rent with their own kitchenettes—ideal for those on a budget. *Norman Manley Boulevard. ☎ 876-957-4318. www.kuyaba.com. 18 units. Doubles $56–97. AE, MC, V. Map p 140.*

kids **Legends** LONG BAY An excellent low-budget choice in a prime location. The cheerfully-painted, two-story blocks of rooms are located just behind Long Bay beach, or across the road from it, in a tree-shaded setting. Each has a terrace or balcony. Interiors are modestly furnished with floral bedspreads adding a splash of color. You'll find a wide range of bars, clubs, and restaurants all within easy walking distance. *Norman Manley Boulevard. ☎ 876-957-4395. www.negrilhotels.com. 49 units. Doubles $76–190. AE, MC, V. Map p 140.*

Moon Dance Cliffs WEST END A smart, contemporary all-inclusive hotel. The cream-colored Palladian-style building borders lawns leading to a hip pool, sun terrace, and romantic restaurant at the water's edge. Rooms are generous and decorated in muted autumnal hues. Higher category rooms come with Jacuzzi hot tubs on their sea-view balconies. *West End Road. ☎ 876-957-9000. www.moondanceresorts.com/cliffs. 22 units. Doubles $225–275. AE, MC, V. Map p 140.*

Where to **Dine**

★★★ **Canoe Beach Bar & Grill** WEST END ROAD *JAMAICAN* This attractive clap-board beach house is the 'in' place to dine or sip a rum. Its lounge-bar has wicker sofas with Caribbean-print scatter cushions and there is a shady terrace overlooking the sea for dining. Enjoy one of the strong and fruity rum punches or feast on freshly-cooked fish dishes piled high with vegetables, pasta salad, and coleslaw. *West End Road. ☎ 876-957-4814 or ☎ 876-878-5893. www.realnegril.com/canoe. Mains $7–12. No credit cards. Daily 11am–11pm. Map p 140.*

kids Cosmo's Seafood Restaurant & Bar BLOODY BAY *INTERNATIONAL/CARIBBEAN* Burgers, club sandwiches, and stewed pork count among the hearty fare at this casual restaurant on the beach. Eat barefoot at the picnic tables on the sand or in the thatched, fan-cooled dining rooms. Members of staff always seem to have smiles on their faces; the service is unusually swift, and the chef makes the best escovitched fish in town. ***Norman Manley Boulevard. ☎ 876-957-4784. Mains $4–11. MC, V. Daily 11.30am–10pm. Map p 140.***

kids Legends Beach Restaurant LONG BAY *CARIBBEAN/CONTINENTAL* ***This simple, friendly beach cafe*** in front of Legends hotel (see p 143), has a restaurant atmosphere in the evenings. Tables are set around a central bar that serves cocktails laced with generous shots of alcohol. Typical dishes are seafood pasta, grilled steak, and fish. This is also arguably the best place in town to have lobster. ***Norman Manley Boulevard. ☎ 876-957-3834. Mains $12–34. MC, V. Daily 8am–10pm. Map p 140.***

★ On the Rocks Restaurant & Bar WEST END *SEAFOOD/INTERNATIONAL/JAMAICAN* This is a cool, local eatery that is tourist friendly. The restaurant dining area isn't particularly pleasing on the eye. The view from it, however, across the water to Long Bay, is panoramic. There is also a small private beach for customer use. The food is freshly cooked and flavorsome, especially the curried shrimp and fricassee chicken. The club sandwiches and conch salad are also tasty. Lunch is a quiet, laid-back affair, while evenings are a little livelier. Wednesday night is party night, and it can get boisterous and busy once the bands or DJs start playing at around 9pm. ***West End Road. ☎ 876-957-0222. www.ontherocksnegriljamaica.com. Mains $6–18.No credit cards. Daily Noon–2am. Map p 140.***

Canoe Beach Bar & Grill.

Push Cart Grill & Rum Bar WEST END *JAMAICAN* A fun, bistro-style eatery with an open kitchen. Chefs take Jamaican street food as their inspiration and then cook it to restaurant standards. Jerk chicken is skewered and accompanied by fruity chutney; and callaloo and ackee are added to pasta dishes. The cocktails are potent and punchy. The Drunken Coconut is one to try—a mix of Appleton gold rum, coconut rum, pineapple juice, and coconut water served in a whole coconut. ***West End Road. ☎ 876-957-4373. www.rockhousehotel.com/eat/pushcartMains $7–16. AE, MC, V. Daily 3pm–11pm. Map p 140.***

kids Rick's Café WEST END *INTERNATIONAL* The most popular bar to watch the sunset from also has tasty, filling food. Snacks such as BBQ chicken wings are the perfect accompaniment to a sun-downer. Dine at the bar's restaurant on the upper deck for the best view of the horizon as the light fades. For dinner, try the surf and turf, followed by the tempting chocolate brownie dessert. ***West End Road. ☎ 876-957-0380. www.rickscafejamaica.com. Mains***

On the Rocks Restaurant & Bar.

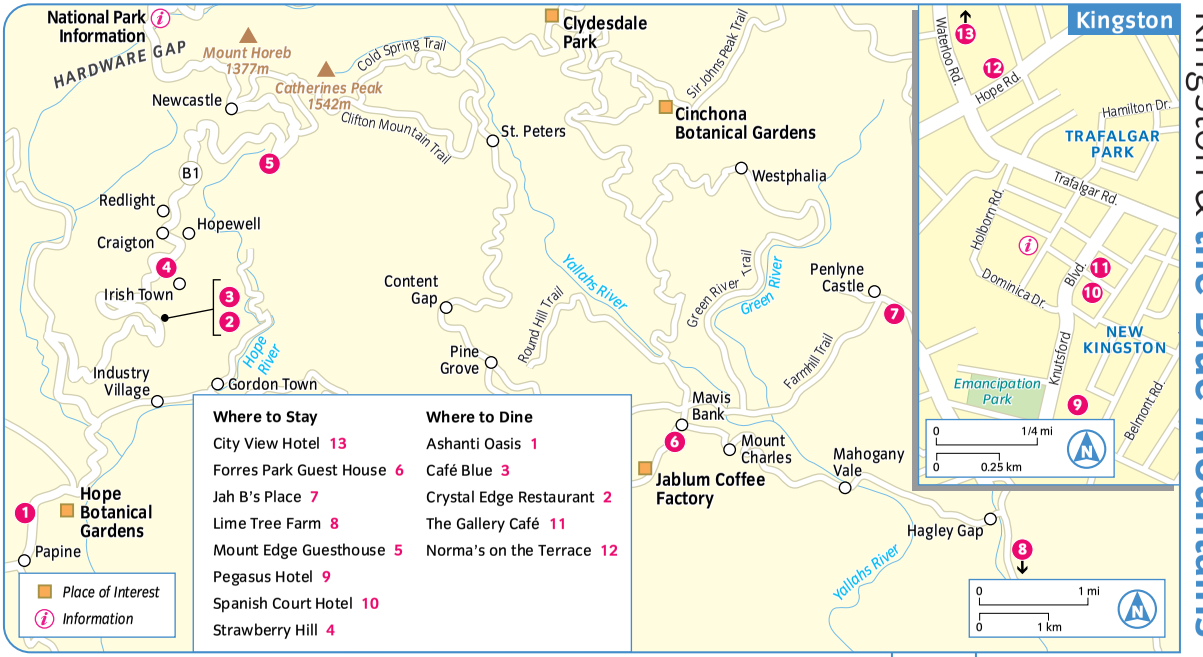
$17–29. AE, MC, V. Daily Noon–10.30pm. Map p 140.

Xtabi WEST END *INTERNATIONAL* This is one of the best places for sea-view dining, set on a paved terrace that hugs the rocks. Come for breakfast or lunch and you can snorkel and swim for free, gaining access to the sea via the restaurant's series of caves. Arrive for dinner in time to watch the sunset. Culinary delights include mushroom caps stuffed with lobster, herbs and cream, deep-fried chicken and New York strip loin. *Lighthouse Road. ☎ 876-957-0121 or ☎ 876-957-0524. Mains $15–25. AE, MC, V. Daily 8am–11pm. Map p 140.*

Nightlife

Reggae fans are in for a treat in Negril. International stars as well as up-and-coming acts regularly grace the resort's stages. Musicians love to play here as the crowds are known for their energy and enthusiasm. The hottest spots in town—such as **Bourbon Beach** (☎ 876-957-4405, www.bourbonbeachnegril.com) and **Negril Escape** (☎ 876-957-0392, www.negrilescape.com/events) on the cliffs—may get crowded, but going to at least one music show is an essential part of the Negril experience. Alfred's Ocean Palace is another favorite. It's right on Long Bay beach. Partying crowds spill out onto the sand, jerk chicken and Red Stripe in hand. The number one nightclub is The Jungle (y 876-957-4005, www.junglenegril.com). It can get pretty wild and flirtatious inside (especially on a Thursday night, which is the Ladies' Night party, when women get in for free). The club's slogan is 'unleash the animal.'

Kingston & the Blue Mountains



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From the bright city lights of Kingston to the sunlit rain-forest heights of the Blue Mountains, two richly-contrasting experiences stand side by side: stay at a contemporary and edgy hotel one night; sleep in a humble mountainside hut the next with nothing but the sound of cicadas to keep you company. The cuisine also varies—from hearty, rustic fare to fine city dining. This north-eastern region of Jamaica most appeals to confident, independent travelers happy to forgo the cosseting of the all-inclusive resorts and the good roads of the north coast.

Where to **Stay**

★★ **City View Hotel** SMOKEY VALE This traditional, red-roofed hotel, set in landscaped gardens and surrounded by picket fencing, is run by the Brents—an Anglo-Jamaican couple. They aim to provide a home-away-from-home from a hillside location just a short drive from the city. All rooms are tastefully decorated and have their own theme from floral to colonial. The terrace has incredible views of Kingston and the affable hosts are happy to assist with their guests' every travel and sightseeing need. ***Mannings Hill Road, Smokey Vale. ☎ 876-969-4009 or ☎ 976-969-4390. www.cityviewjamaica.com. 10 units. Doubles $90–180. MC, V. Map p 146.***

Forres Park Guest House MAVIS BANK A driveway hugged by foliage leads to this Swiss-chalet-style country inn. Rooms with sturdy dark-wood wardrobes and dressers look out onto extensive, well-stocked gardens. Those with the four-poster beds are the best appointed and most attractive. ***Mavis Bank, Blue Mountains. ☎ 876-977-8141 or ☎ 876-927-5957. www.forrespark.com. 16 units. Doubles $85–150. MC, V. Map p 146.***

Jah B's Place HAGLEY GAP Rastafarian farmer Jah B provides basic rooms with en-suite bathrooms; dormitory-style accommodation in a newly-built concrete block; and rooms with a shared bathroom in a wooden cabin for those looking to hike the Blue Mountain Peak. It is conveniently close to the trail head and, for an additional cost, the owner's four sons (all trained guides) will lead you to the peak before dawn to watch the sun rise over the entire island. Jah B is also a very good vegetarian cook and prepares dinner for guests if ordered in advance. A pot of coffee also awaits walkers before they set off on Jamaica's most epic hike (see p 110). ***Whitfield Hall District, Hagley Gap, Blue Mountains. ☎ 876-377-5206 or ☎ 876-849-2115.***

Forres Park Guest House.

6 units. Doubles $40–50 full board. Cash and travelers' checks only. Map p 146.

★★★ kids Lime Tree Farm MAVIS BANK This working coffee plantation and countryside hideaway high in the Blue Mountains is one of my favorite places to stay. The comfortable, modestly-furnished cottages with TV and DVD players make an ideal base for exploring the alluring, but remote, Jamaican 'outback'. The property boasts incredible views of the Yallus Valley, Blue Mountain Peak, and Mavis Bank, as well as spectacular sunsets and star-lit skies by night. Meals are served in a safari-style, semi-outdoor dining room with a communal table and plump sofas, where guests can enjoy a pre- and post-dinner drink. Husband and wife team Charlie and Suzie Burbury are warm and generous hosts: Suzie is an exceptional cook and Charlie an excellent tour guide. Excursions to Cinchona, hiking in the Blue Mountains, and bird-watching are offered to guests. *Tower Hill, Mavis Bank, Blue Mountains. ☎ 876-881-8788. www.limetreefarm.com. 4 units. Doubles $312 full board. Cash and travelers' checks only. Map p 146.*

★★ Mount Edge Guesthouse NEWCASTLE What this adorable guesthouse lacks in amenities, it more than makes up for with its location. Wooden huts on stilts built into the sloping hillside provide eco-friendly, tree-house style accommodation. The rooms and bathrooms (some shared) offer a no-frills base in an idyllic setting. *Nr Newcastle, Blue Mountains. ☎ 876-944-8974 or ☎ 976-432-0891. www.mountedge.com. 6 units. Doubles $30–50. Cash only. Map p 146.*

Pegasus Hotel NEW KINGSTON A favorite with business travelers and conference delegates as well as tourists. Located next to Emancipation Park (see p 107), the friendly staff do all they can to help you make the most of your stay in the capital. The communal areas are a little dated but the recently-refurbished bedrooms have a contemporary feel, thanks to the soft, autumnal hues of their soft furnishings and white bedding. *81 Knutsford Boulevard, Kingston 5. ☎ 876-926-3691. www.jamaicapegasus.com. 300 units. Doubles $300–370. AE, DC, MC, V. Map p 146.*

Spanish Court Hotel NEW KINGSTON It's hard to believe that this building was once a non-descript shopping center. Indeed, the city's first boutique hotel deserves all the praise it has received. The rooms are chic and minimalist with deeply-colored furnishings, clever lighting, sumptuously-soft bedding, and luxurious, modern bathrooms. Rooms come with all mod cons—plasma screen TVs, i-Pod docks, and free wireless Internet access. The outdoor pool terrace with its parasols gives the hotel a Mediterranean

Lime Tree Farm, a working coffee plantation in the Blue Mountains.

Blue Mountain Coffee

One of the most expensive and most sought-after coffees in the world is grown on the plantations of Jamaica's highest mountain range. Blue Mountain coffee is sweet, smooth, and mellow. The Arabica bean thrives in the rich soil that is found on these steep elevations. Regular rainfall and the island's misty cloud cover shade the delicate bean from getting too much direct sunlight. The result is a coffee with a rich, full-bodied flavor, mild in acidity, and low in caffeine. Japan is the largest importer of Blue Mountain coffee, buying approximately 80% of the crop every year. The rest of the world haggles over the remaining 20%, which is generally only sold in the finest food halls of up-scale department stores. Curiously, the Jamaicans like to drink it with tinned, ultra-sweet condensed milk.

feel. The restaurant is one of the most popular in the city and serves classic Jamaican dishes with a European twist in an elegant setting (see p 150). *1 St Lucia Avenue. ☎ 876-926-0000. www.spanishcourthotel.com. 108 units. Doubles $140–200. AE, DC, MC, V. Map p 146.*

★★★ Strawberry Hill IRISH TOWN This may be a celebrity hang-out favored by such rock stars as Bono and Grace Jones, but everyone receives the same courteous welcome and gracious service here, whether you are famous or not. The property offers guests a sense of peace and space and exudes Old Jamaican charm. White-washed, Georgian-style clap-board cottages with wooden shutters cling to the hillside, looking out over the surrounding rainforest from exotic gardens. Interiors feature four-poster beds and classic-design armchairs. There is an incredible view of the Kingston cityscape from the terrace of the main house and from the fresh-water infinity pool. The hotel is the brainchild of Chris Blackwell, a champion of all things authentically Jamaican; founder of Island Records; and the man who brought Bob Marley and the Wailers to the attention of the world's music press. *Newcastle Road, Irish Town. ☎ 876-944-8400. www.islandoutpost.com/strawberry_hill. 12 units. Doubles $195–695. AE, DC, MC, V. Map p 146.*

Georgian-style clap-board cottages at Strawberry Hill.

Where to **Dine**

★ kids **Ashanti Oasis** HOPE BOTANICAL GARDENS *WHOLEFOOD/VEGETARIAN* In the heart of Kingston's 45-acre formal gardens, this cafe has a fish pond and ornamental bridge at the center of its part-open eating area. A menu of rich and spicy vegetarian and vegan dishes is prepared each morning and served with rice. The natural juices are also excellent. ***Hope Botanical Gardens, Hope Road, Kingston. ☎ 876-970-2079. Mains $6–10. MC, V. Daily noon–6pm. Map p 146.***

Café Blue IRISH TOWN *COFFEE BAR* Next door to Crystal Edge Restaurant (see below), this is a 'Jamaican Starbucks'. Serving only top-quality Blue Mountain brands, coffee doesn't come much fresher than this. The beans were grown, picked, and roasted just a few peaks away. The specialty brews are pure indulgence. Try a Café Helena, an espresso laced with Tia Maria and topped with whipped cream. Locally-made rum cake and plantain tart are the perfect accompaniment. ***Irish Town Road, Kingston. ☎ 876-944-8918. Coffees $1.50–2.50, cakes $2–4. AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 9am–6pm. Sat–Sun 9am–9pm. Map p 146.***

Ashanti Oasis in the Hope Botanical Gardens.

Crystal Edge Restaurant IRISH TOWN *JAMAICAN* This small mountainside cafe has views over the valley that descends to Kingston. It's a busy local haunt and a good half-way point to take a break on the way up to the Blue Mountains. Owner Winsome Hall serves large, filling portions of typical country-style dishes, such as curried goat and roast beef with rice and peas, at local prices. ***Irish Town Road, Kingston. ☎ 876-944-8053. Mains $5–10. MC, V. Tues–Sun 8.30am–6pm. Map p 146.***

★★ **The Gallery Café** NEW KINGSTON *CONTINENTAL/JAMAICAN* A hip eatery with a display of black-and-white prints lining the dining room wall, and arty, abstract chairs created by Alison Antrobus. (This Jamaican designer is also the creative brain behind several of Miami's smartest bars and restaurants.) The food lives up to the sleek setting. Pan-fried salmon with Dijon beurre blanc, and grilled pork chops with capers and pickled peppers are among the impressive selection of perfectly-cooked dishes. ***At the Spanish Court Hotel (see p 148). Mains $15–37. AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 6.30pm–9.30pm. Map p 146.***

★★★ **Norma's on the Terrace** DEVON HOUSE *JAMAICAN/MEDITERRANEAN/ INTERNATIONAL* Looking out onto the walled garden of Devon House, this elegant restaurant is the

The Harder They Come

The Harder They Come was the first feature film ever to be produced in Jamaica. Written and directed by islander Perry Henzell in 1972, and based on a true life story, it's a social commentary on the gritty underworld of 1970s Kingston and follows a naïve country boy's introduction to the crime and violence of city life. The soundtrack by Jimmy Cliff is credited, in part, for introducing reggae music to the United States and in 2006 the film was adapted for stage, with the musical version receiving critical acclaim in London. Perry's wife, Sally Henzell, was the film's art director. In recent years she has turned her creative talents to designing Jake's hotel (see p. 153) and other properties in Treasure Beach.

most congenial place in the city to linger over lunch or dinner. ***See p 146.***

Strawberry Hill IRISH TOWN
INTERNATIONAL/MODERN JAMAICAN
The Sunday lunch buffet is the culinary highlight of the week here, thanks to its fabulous jerked meat and fish dishes. The white, wood-paneled dining rooms are adorned with ornate fret-work, while tables on the verandah enjoy an unrivalled view of Kingston. A range of salad and club sandwiches or roti can be enjoyed at lunchtime. There is also a separate vegetarian menu that includes an excellent tofu curry. ***Mains $15–47. AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 11.30am–9.00pm. Map p 146.***

The dining room at Strawberry Hill.

Treasure Beach & the South

Treasure Beach is an ideal base if you enjoy touring and prefer beaches far from the madding crowds. Here, in the south of the island, tourism co-exists with the daily life of local communities. Visitors generally receive a warm welcome, particularly in Treasure Beach where the inhabitants are eager for you to enjoy your stay. Nightlife is simply dining under the stars and opportunities to shop are few. It appeals to those who seek an authentic Jamaican experience and appreciate its rugged, unpolished beauty.

Where to **Stay**

The Lyric's sun terrace.

★★ **Jake's** CALABASH BAY There is nothing else on the island quite like the individually-styled cottages of this hotel, which fringe the rocky coastline on this desirable slice of Treasure Beach. They have a dream-like quality about them, at once Moorish, bohemian, and Bahamian. Interiors are expressionistic and sensual. Driftwood, tile mosaics, colored glass, and sea shells turn the walls of the bedrooms and outdoor shower rooms into works of art. Some accommodations have private roof terraces with scatter cushions and Bedouin-style sail-shades. ***Calabash Bay. ☎ 876-946-1958. www.islandoutpost.com. 31 units. Doubles $95–115. AE, DC, MC, V. Map p 152.***

Lyric CALABASH BAY This charming beach house, fashioned from wood and cut stone, is ideal for families or groups of friends. There are four bedrooms that sleep up to seven people and two bathrooms. The beach is just a few steps away and views of Calabash Bay—beyond the villa's garden—can be enjoyed from the pool-side sun terrace. The price includes the services of a friendly team of staff, including an excellent cook and a housekeeper who will also do laundry for you. Bedrooms are mid-size, with simple

white furnishings. ***Calabash Bay. ☎ 876-965-0126. www. treasure-beach.net and click on 'Where to Stay'. Villa $1,100–2,100 per week. MC, V. Map p 152.***

Mandeville Hotel MANDEVILLE The best accommodation by far in Jamaica's 'City of the South'. Located in the center of town, most rooms have private balconies and face the pool and terrace area, where breakfast is served. Ask for one of the recently-refurbished rooms. They have been spruced up by the owner's daughter who has a keen eye for color, using a range of red and orange tones in the soft furnishings and vibrant artwork by local artists. ***4 Hotel Street, Mandeville. ☎ 876-962-2460. www.mandevillehotel jamaica.com. 65 units. Doubles $77–105. AE, DC, MC, V. Map p 152.***

★ **Marblue** CALABASH BAY This German-owned, efficiently-run property has direct beach access and an exceptional restaurant. Contemporary furnishings and African fabrics give the spacious rooms a sophisticated feel and the private balconies all have sea views. ***Calabash Bay, Treasure Beach. ☎ 876-965-3408. www.marblue.com. 8 units. Doubles $115–295. MC, V. Map p 152.***

★★ **Minerva House** BILLY'S BAY For complete privacy and exclusivity, this four-bedroom villa is one of the most desirable residences in Treasure Beach, and comes complete with staff. In a secluded location west of the resort center, it attracts rock stars, families, and honeymooners. The property's curvy infinity pool sits at the edge of a stone sun terrace above the sand and is screened by trees. The long beach beneath the pool belongs entirely to the villa and is very 'Robinson Crusoe', strewn with driftwood and sea shells. The interior is contemporary with high ceilings and an Art Deco feel and the villa boasts satellite television and wireless Internet. ***Billy's Bay, Treasure Beach. ☎ 876-469-4828. www.minervahouse.com. $4,900 per week. MC,V. Map p 152.***

Nuestra Casa BILLY'S BAY Run by a well-spoken English gentleman and his team (a local family), expect warm Jamaican hospitality and finesse at this charming bed-and-breakfast. The house has a 1960s feel and the rooms are full of character with interesting books and knick-knacks adding a homely touch. The lounge, where breakfast and aperitifs are served, looks out onto a well-tended garden. Evening meals, day trips around the south coast, and airport pick-ups can also be arranged. ***Billy's Bay, Treasure Beach. ☎ 876-965-0152 or ☎ 876-429-9980. www.billysbay.com. 3 units. Doubles $45–55. No credit cards. Map p 152.***

Sunset Resort & Villas CALABASH BAY A touch of Florida meets Jamaica at this beachfront hotel. Themed rooms are busy with dolphins, flamingos, parrots, mermaids, and other tropical emblems. This is a fun and friendly place to stay, partly due to the warm, energetic, and meticulous owner, Kory South. A keen fisherman, his catch is regularly served at the hotel's casual restaurant. An artificial grass lawn surrounds the pool area where barbecues are regularly hosted, giving guests the chance to mingle and enjoy a few Red Stripes. ***Calabash Bay, Treasure Beach. ☎ 876-965-0143. www.sunsetresort.com. 14 units. Doubles $90–185. AE, DC, MC, V. Map p 152.***

Where to **Dine**

Bird of Paradise.

Bird of Paradise MANDEVILLE *INTERNATIONAL/JAMAICAN* A welcoming local eatery that is part of a modern shopping village. The food is excellent, with classic Jamaican dishes given an extra burst of life with subtle Latino and continental twists. Try the spicy shrimp margarita, which is cooked with tequila. Diners can choose to sit on the part-open latticework terrace or in the cozy dining room, where the decor is inspired by the bird of paradise flower. ***Cobblestone Professional Centre, 1 Brumalia Road, Mandeville. ☎ 876-962-6529. www.birdofparadisejm.com. Mains $7–14. MC, V. Daily 10am–10pm. Map p 152.***

Bloomfield Great House MANDEVILLE *MEDITERRANEAN/INTERNATIONAL* Dinner is served on the enchanting candlelit terrace of this stately hilltop property. Start with drinks in the colonial-style mahogany bar before feasting on the likes of mustard-crusted lamb chops with rosemary jus or chicken cordon bleu. ***8 Perth Road, Mandeville. ☎ 876-962-7130. Mains $7–21. MC, V. Mon–Sat Noon–9pm. Map p 152.***

★ kids **Jack Sprat Restaurant & Bar** CALABASH BAY *INTERNATIONAL/JAMAICAN* A great atmosphere accompanies the food at this shabby-chic beach- shack. Oven-fresh pizzas are the favorite order, with regular toppings combining with the more exotic (including lobster and jerk sausage). Picnic-style tables are spread across the lantern-lit lawn and the music is soulful, reggae, and funky in turns. It's the coolest hangout on this stretch of the coast. Service can be a little relaxed, but on the plus side, the staff is sociable and happy to be

Jack Sprat Restauarnt & Bar.

engaged in conversation. They also serve cones of Devon House I-Scream (see p 134). ***Calabash Bay (in the grounds of Jake's hotel), Treasure Beach. ☎ 876-965-3583. www.islandoutpost.com. Mains $7–14. AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 10am–10pm. Map p 152.***

★★ **Jake's Place** *INTERNATIONAL* The garden restaurant of Jake's hotel (see p 153) offers a varied menu served in a setting that has a low-key tropical meets high-living vibe. Candlelit tables, draped with African cloth, sit beneath a canopy of sea grape trees adorned with twinkling fairy lights. Sweet and spicy pork ribs with mashed potato and vegetables, and pan-fried snapper with ginger sauce are the type of daily specials chalked up on the blackboard wall menu. The chocolate and Tia Maria dessert with vanilla ice cream is particularly satisfying. Each time I eat at Jake's Place the food gets better and better. Breakfast and lunch are also available. ***Jake's hotel, Calabash Bay, Treasure Beach. ☎ 876-946-1958.***

Little Ochi's beach huts.

www.islandoutpost.com. Mains $10–25. AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 7.30am–10pm. Map p 152.

★★★ **Little Ochi** ALLIGATOR POND *SEAFOOD/JAMAICAN* Every fruit of the sea found in the island's waters is cooked to perfection at this understated culinary gem (see p 52). ***Map p 152.***

★★★ **Marblue** CALABASH BAY *INTERNATIONAL* The most refined restaurant in Treasure Beach. Chef Axel Wichterich goes to great lengths to source the finest ingredients, both internationally and from across Jamaica, to create innovative dishes with great flare. Pumpkin soup perfumed with Appleton Rum and topped with a ginger crisp, and fillet of snapper on a bed of Merlot oxtail with goat cheese pralines are his signature fare. ***Calabash Bay, Treasure Beach. ☎ 876-965-3408. www.marblue.com. Mains $19–39. MC, V. Tues–Sun 6.30pm–11pm, last orders 8.30pm. Map p 152.***

★★ **Smurf's Café** FRENCHMAN'S BAY *CAFE* Known locally as 'Dawn's Place', the owner is renowned for her cookery skills and hard-working spirit. Nothing is too much trouble for Dawn; service is speedy; and the breakfasts are the best in town—whether you go for the pancakes and bacon, callaloo and cheese omelets, or standard ackee and saltfish. Dawn barbecues jerk chicken at lunchtime in an oil drum on the cafe's simple terrace. Beware! The coffee is delicious but ultra-strong. ***Heading west from Jake's on the coast road (the next corner after Treasure Beach Hotel). ☎ 876-483-7523. Mains $4–7. No credit cards. Daily 6am–4pm. Map p 152.***

The Savvy Traveler

Before You Go

Government Tourist Offices

In the USA Florida 5201 Blue Lagoon Drive, Suite # 670, Miami, Florida 33126. ☎ 305-665-0557. info@visitjamaica-usa.com.

New York 20th Floor, 801 Second Ave, New York, NY 10017. ☎ 212-856-9727. info@visitjamaica-usa.com.

In Canada 303 Eglinton Avenue East, Suite 200, Toronto, Ontario, M4P IL3. ☎ 416-482-7850. jtb@visitjamaica-ca.com.

In the UK 1–2 Prince Consort Road, London, SW7 2BZ, United Kingdom ☎ 207-225-9090, mail@visitjamaica.uk.com.

Useful Websites

The official tourism website for Jamaica is **www.visitjamaica.com.**

www.treasurebeach.net gives details of accommodations, restaurants, and attractions in Treasure Beach on the south coast, while **www.jamaicans.com** provides a light-hearted overview of island destinations, language, culture, and cuisine.

The island's best-selling newspaper *The Gleaner* **www.jamaica-gleaner.com** has listings, news stories, and details of up-and-coming events, as does the island's other major daily, the *Jamaica Observer* **www.jamaicaobserver.com.** Try **www.jis.gov.jm** for information on the island's current affairs.

For flight information check **www.mbjairport.com** for Montego Bay's Sangster International Airport, and **www.nmia.aero** for Kingston's Norman Manley International Airport.

The official website of the Jamaica National Heritage Trust **www.jnht.com** has useful information on historic and cultural sites. See **www.countrystylecommunitytourism.com** for the umbrella organization that facilitates a range of tours into villages, schools, and small Jamaican communities, enabling visitors to meet the islanders.

If you are interested in learning more about Rastafarian culture, **www.rastafarian.net** is a useful website. **www.bobmarley.com** offers comprehensive information about the King of Reggae. For classical music, **www.jamaicasymphony.com** gives performance details of the island's Symphony orchestra, formed in 2008.

VISA Information

Entry visas are not required for visitors from **Australia, Canada,** the **EU, New Zealand,** the **UK** and the **US**.

The Best Time to Go

Jamaica's high season runs roughly from mid-December until mid-April. The weather is pleasantly warm and not humid. However, hotel prices are higher. During Spring Break (for North American college students) from mid-March to mid-April, Montego Bay and Negril get busier and noisier. Rainy season runs from June until October. Showers are usually short and heavy at this time. It is worth bearing in mind there can also be short periods of heavy rainfall at other times of year. The winter months (from December to February) tend to be the coolest and the driest. This is also the best time to go hiking (from December through to April), and also from June to September. The pleasant tropical climate encourages many North American migrant birds to winter on the island and even more to rest

Previous page: Errol Flynn Marina.

AVERAGE TEMPERATURE & RAINFALL IN JAMAICA

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE
Hours Sunshine	8	8	9	7	7	7
Rainfall (mm)	23	15	23	30	100	86
Max Temp. (°C)	30	30	30	31	31	32
Min Temp. (°C)	19	19	20	21	22	23
Sea Temp. (°C)	25	25	25	26	27	27

	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
Hours Sunshine	8	8	7	6	6	8
Rainfall (mm)	86	89	96	178	76	36
Max Temp. (°C)	32	32	32	31	31	31
Min Temp. (°C)	23	23	23	23	22	21
Sea Temp. (°C)	28	28	27	27	26	26

here while on spring migration. Jamaican species nest in spring, too, making winter and spring the ideal seasons for bird spotters. Hurricane season officially runs from the beginning of June to the end of October, although on average Jamaica is only hit once every decade. It is at its height in August and September. You can also expect higher temperatures and higher humidity during these months. International and inter-island cricket matches are generally held from January through to August at Sabina Park (see p 81).

Public Holidays

Jamaica has 10 public holidays. Some attractions and restaurants are closed on Good Friday and Christmas Day. Many attractions do not close, even on Christmas Day.

New Year's Day—1st January
Ash Wednesday
Good Friday
Easter Monday
Labor Day (celebrated in late May)
Emancipation Day—1st August (see p. 172)
Independence Day—6th August
National Heroes' Day (third Monday in October)
Christmas Day—25th December
Boxing Day—26th December

Festivals & Special Events

Jamaica has a diverse range of festivals throughout the year.

JAN. **Accompong Maroon Festival.** A celebration of Maroon heritage with singing, dancing, and traditional rituals. Accompong, St Elizabeth.

Air Jamaica Jazz and Blues Festival, Montego Bay.

FEB. **Bob Marley Week.** Held on or around 6th February—Bob Marley's birthday. The island-wide celebrations include parties and concerts.

Jamaica Fat Tire Festival. Mountain biking event with trail- and downhill-rides and parties. Ocho Rios, St Mary.

MAR. **Jamaica Orchid Society Show.** Thousands of orchids are on display at this colorful show. Assembly Hall, University of the West Indies, Kingston.

Miss Jamaica Universe. Beauty pageant. Kingston.

APR. **Carnival.** Costumed street parade and dancing. Kingston, Montego Bay, and Ocho Rios.

Montego Bay Yacht Club Easter Regatta. Races in various classes can be viewed from the harbor.

Jamaican Dollars

The country's currency is the Jamaican Dollar, however US dollars are widely accepted island-wide and often more convenient to use. Many restaurants list their prices in USD as do larger hotels and their gift shops. Even street vendors and market traders will happily accept either US dollars or Jamaican Dollars. US visitors, of course, also have the opportunity to avoid currency exchange commission fees if they use US dollars during their stay.

MAY. **Calabash Literary Festival.** Poetry and literature read on the beach by their authors. Treasure Beach, St Elizabeth.

International Style Week. Jamaican and international designers showcase their collections. Kingston.

JUNE. **Epicurean Escape.** Gourmet food and wine-tasting event with cookery demonstrations by top chefs. Breezes Grand Negril (see p. 141).

Ocho Rios International Jazz Festival. Music and entertainment event featuring international and Jamaican performers. Ocho Rios, St Mary.

JULY. **International Reggae Day.** Online and on-air festival celebrating Jamaica's best-known music genre. Tune into local TV channels and radio stations to hear concerts of top reggae stars past and present. Island-wide.

Little Ochi Seafood Festival. Music, games, and a chance to feast on this restaurant's best seafood dishes. Alligator Pond, St Elizabeth. (see p. 52).

Portland Jerk Festival. Jerk cook-offs and live music. Port Antonio, Portland.

Reggae Sumfest. A week-long music event with beach parties and concerts featuring mainly reggae, soul, and rap artists. Montego Bay.

AUG. **Denbigh Agricultural Show.** Livestock and produce exhibits and competitions between farmers. May Pen, Clarendon.

Emancipation and Independence Day Celebrations. Events, activities, and festivals are held island-wide.

SEPT. **Falmouth Fishing Tournament.** Fishermen compete to land the best catch.

OCT. **Oktoberfest.** Festival of German food, beer, and wine with beer-drinking contests and cultural performances. Kingston.

NOV. **Kingston Restaurant Week.** Special three-course menus at reduced prices encourage diners to try the city's range of restaurants.

DEC. **LTM National Pantomime.** Song, music, dance, and political commentary combine in this seasonal show. The Little Theatre, Kingston.

Motor Sports Championship Series. The Jamaica Millennium Motoring Club's top car rally event. Spot Valley Raceway, St James.

Getting **There**

By Plane

Jamaica has two international airports, Donald Sangster (MBJ) in Montego Bay (☎ 876-952-3124 www.mbjairport.com) and Norman Manley (KIN) in Kingston (☎ 876-924-8452, www.nmia.aero). Kingston is the best option if you are starting your trip in the capital or are heading into the Blue Mountains or to Port Antonio. Montego Bay is more convenient if you are based in Montego Bay, Ocho Rios, Negril, or Treasure Beach.

From the UK

Flying time is around 10 hours from London. British Airways (☎ 0844-493-0787, www.ba.com) runs a twice-weekly service to Montego Bay and flies three times a week to Kingston. Virgin Atlantic (www.virginatlantic.com, ☎ 0870-380-2007) operates twice-weekly flights to Montego Bay and Kingston. Thomson fly weekly year-round to Montego Bay and twice weekly in high season (☎ 0871-231-4787, www.thomson.co.uk).

From the USA

American Airlines (☎ 800-433-7300, www.aa.com) offers frequent direct flights from Chicago, Dallas–Fort Worth, Miami, and New York to Montego Bay and from Miami to Kingston. Continental Airlines (☎ 800-231-0856, www.continental.com) flies regular direct services from Houston and Newark to Montego Bay. Air Jamaica (☎ 800-523-5585, www.airjamaica.com) operates frequent services between numerous US cities and Montego Bay and Kingston (including Ft Lauderdale, Philadelphia, and Washington).

In addition to the airlines listed above, the following companies also operate services to Jamaica (check websites for full details of schedules and services):
Delta (www.delta.com)
United Airlines (www.united.com)
US Airways (www.usairways.com)

From Canada

Air Canada (☎ 888-247-2262 www.aircanada.com) offers daily flights from Toronto, twice-weekly services from Montreal, and weekly flights from Calgary, Edmonton, Halifax, Ottawa, Vancouver, and Winnipeg to Montego Bay. There is also a twice-weekly service from Toronto to Kingston. Westjet (☎ 888-937-8538, www.westjet.com) flies from three times a week from Toronto to Montego Bay, and seasonally from Ottawa to Montego Bay.

Tour Operators

Many visitors to Jamaica book a package that includes flights, transfers, and accommodation. This is often the cheapest way to travel to the country and there are plenty of companies offering these deals. Below are a handful based in Canada, the US, and the UK.

CANADA

Signature Travel: www.signaturevacations.com
Sunquest Holidays: www.sunquestvacations.ca
Transat Holidays: www.transatholidays.com

USA

Apple Vacations: www.applevacations.com
Funjet Vacations: www.funjet.com
United Vacations: www.unitedvacations.com

UK

Caribtours: www.caribtours.co.uk
Cosmos: www.cosmos-holidays.co.uk
Thomson: www.thomson.co.uk
Virgin Holidays: www.virginholidays.co.uk

By Sea

Jamaica has two established cruise ship ports—Montego Bay and Ocho Rios. Falmouth is also scheduled to open as a cruise ship port in late 2010 after a multi-million dollar revitalization project. For attractions which are easily accessible from Montego Bay, Ocho Rios, and Falmouth, see Chapter 5. The terminal building in Montego Bay has gift, souvenir, and specialty shops; a communications center with phone and fax; and refreshment outlets. Taxi transport, supervised by the Jamaica Tourist Board, is available from the terminal building to local attractions and to the center of town, approximately 8km (5 miles) away. The port at Ocho Rios is right outside the town center with shops and restaurants within easy walking distance. Official JUTA taxis (see p. 165) are readily available at the dock.

Numerous cruise ship operators offer itineraries that dock at Jamaica, including the following:
Celebrity Cruises: www.celebritycruises.co.uk
Fred Olsen: www.fredolsencruises.com
Holland America Line: www.hollandamerica.com
Norwegian Cruise Line: www.ncl.com
Princess Cruises: www.princess.com
Royal Caribbean International: www.royalcaribbean.com
Voyages of Discovery: www.voyagesofdiscovery.co.uk
Windstar Cruises: www.windstarcruises.com

Getting **Around**

Jamaica is approximately 235km (146 miles) long, 82km (51 miles) across at its widest point, and rises 2,256m (7,402 ft) above sea level at its highest point. The third largest of the Caribbean isles, it is about the size of the US state of Connecticut and is one-twentieth the size of the UK. It may be a relatively small island, but it can be hard to get around quickly unless you hire a car. Public transport is cheap and plentiful, if a little haphazard at times, and runs island-wide. Taxis are a good option if there are only a handful of sights you plan to visit, while a good domestic flight network serves to make the island smaller—even if it is an expensive way to travel.

By Car

If you are intent on doing a large amount of sightseeing then hiring a car is the best option. Rental fees cost around $60 per day including insurance. Gas prices are around 50% higher than in the USA and about a third cheaper than in the UK. There are international and domestic car rental companies at both Kingston International and Montego Bay airports and some in larger towns, including the following:

Kingston
Avis, 1 Merrick Avenue (☎ 876-926-8021, www.avis.com)
Budget, 53 South Camp Road (☎ 876-759-1793, www.budget.com)
Kingston International Airport
Avis (☎ 876-924-8293, www.avis.com)
Budget (☎ 876-924-8762, www.budget.com)
Hertz (☎ 876-924-8028, www.hertz.com)
Island Car Rentals (☎ 876-924-8075, www.islandcarrentals.com)
Mandeville
Hemisphere, 51 Manchester Road (☎ 876-962-1921, www.hemispherecarrental.com)
Montego Bay
Fiesta Car Rentals, Sunset Beach Resort & Spa, Freeport (☎ 876-684-9388 or ☎ 876-684-9444, www.fiestacarrentals.com)
Montego Bay Airport
Avis (☎ 876-952-0762, www.avis.com)
Budget (☎ 876-952-3838, www.budget.com)
Hertz (☎ 876-979-0438, www.hertz.com)
Island Car Rentals, (☎ 876-952-7225, www.islandcarrentals.com)
Ocho Rios
Budget, 15 Milford Road (☎ 876-974-1288, www.budget.com)

Travel Between Airports & Hotels

Except for budget accommodations, nearly all hotels in Jamaica offer complimentary transfers to and from the airport, or will arrange for a driver to meet you outside the arrivals area. Public buses do not service the airports. Official JUTA taxis (see p. 165) are available outside the airports and have set rates for downtown and island-wide destinations. Ask to see their rate card to check you are not being overcharged before you start your journey. Private shuttle buses are also available and, for single travelers, this can work out cheaper than hiring a taxi. Remember to check that they bear the JUTA insignia (see p. 165) that shows they are recognized as official and licensed passenger-carrying transportation before you take a ride.

Public Buses

There is a frequent and reliable public bus service in and around Kingston. The rest of the island is serviced by an informal network of minibuses (see below). Bus terminals can be somewhat chaotic. To save you wandering between vehicles trying to find out which one services your chosen destination, ask a Jamaican to point you to the right bus. Timetables are pretty much non-existent, with minibuses tending to leave when they are full or when the driver decides he is ready to go.

Bus Stations in Major Towns

Black River—by the market (just off Main Street), for destinations including Kingston, Treasure Beach, Mandeville, and Negril.
Kingston—at the junction of Beckford Street and Pechon Street, for destinations island-wide.
Montego Bay—located at the corner of Howard Cooke Boulevard and Barnett Street, for destinations island-wide.
Negril—on the Sheffield Road, for destinations including Montego Bay and Savanna-la-Mar.
Ocho Rios—between Main Street and the Ocho Rios bypass near the police station, for routes including Port Antonio, Montego Bay, and Kingston.
Port Antonio—located on Gideon Avenue by the waterfront, for buses to destinations including Montego Bay and Kingston.
Savanna-la-Mar—at the northern end of Great George Street. Connect here for services to the south coast.

Minibuses

Privately-owned minibuses connect all the island's towns and many villages—although you may need to change buses several times when making longer journeys, for example from Port Antonio to Treasure Beach. They leave from the transport hubs in major towns. The route and destination are usually displayed in the driver's window. A red number plate signifies that it is licensed to carry passengers. Minibuses offer economic transport over longer distances. You can expect to pay around $5 for an 80km (50 mile) journey, but confirm the fare before you board. They only stop at designated points in towns and cities, but can otherwise be hailed from the roadside or from one of the island's bus stations. They will pick you up and drop you off anywhere on the route. Tell the driver or conductor your destination when you pay, then call out 'stop' or 'one stop' when you want to get off. Don't expect to be comfortable or for the minibus to run to a timetable. Drivers squeeze in as many people as possible and generally don't leave the terminus until they are full to bursting. Keep your luggage as close to you as possible even if this means paying a second fare if it is occupying the seat beside you. It is not advisable to have it strapped to the roof. Traveling by minibus is a great way to get to chat to Jamaicans. However, it can also prove to be a spine-chilling ride. Drivers generally pay little attention to the rules of the road and are often reckless, even overtaking on blind bends.

The Knutsford Express

This is the most pleasant form of public transport in Jamaica. Operational since 2006, this professional company runs a bus service between Kingston, Ocho Rios, and Montego Bay. Buses are driven with due care, the seats are comfortable, and the vehicles air-conditioned. The service is punctual and bookings can be made in advance online. There are three services a day during the week and two at weekends. Buses leave from the Jerk Centre on Dacosta Drive in Ocho Rios, from 18 Dominica Drive in Kingston, and from 10 Harbour Circle near Pier 1 in Montego Bay. The journey time from Montego Bay to Kingston is around four hours. The return fare is approximately $23. At the time of going to press there are plans to introduce an additional service from Negril to Kingston.
(☎ 876-971-1822 or ☎ 876-960-5499, www.knutsfordexpress.com)

Route Taxis

These operate in a similar way to buses. The drivers have a set route, usually linking small villages to the larger nearby towns. There should be a sign on the dashboard or painted on the side of the taxi to indicate its route. The vehicles used are typically white sedans or station wagons bearing a red number plate to indicate that they are licensed for public transportation rather than being a private vehicle. You can hail a route taxi by raising your arm whenever you see one coming towards you on the highway. The drivers are eager to complete as many journeys as they can in a day and to cram in as many people as possible for each run to maximize their income from fares. Expect to be traveling at speed and at close quarters with your fellow travelers. It is not unusual for vehicles to be carrying up to seven passengers even if the car is only built for four to ride in comfort. Loud music also comes as standard. This is the primary mode of transport used by Jamaicans to get to work, the market, the shops, or school. Fares are

at a set rate and you should expect to pay around $5 for a journey of around 30 minutes. Confirm your fare with the driver before climbing in and expect to pay extra for luggage.

Official Taxis

The standard of driving and the quality of vehicle tends to be far higher when you privately hire a taxi. As well as for short journeys, you can often charter the vehicle for a day, negotiating a fixed rate with the driver and agreeing upon an island-tour itinerary. Typically expect to pay around $150 per day, although in low season this could be as low as $100. Make sure you always use an official taxi. As well as having the red license plate, which indicates it is licensed to carry passengers, the vehicle should bear the insignia of JUTA (Jamaican Union of Travelers Association) on its bodywork. As always, agree the fare before you accept the ride and ask to see the driver's official rate card to check that you are not being overcharged.

Unofficial Taxis

Eager to earn extra cash, some car owners will approach you in busy areas and at the exits of shopping centers, the airport, and nightclubs touting their services as official taxi drivers even though they are not licensed to carry passengers. It is not advisable to accept a ride in a vehicle that does not have a red license plate.

Domestic Flights

The quickest and easiest, though not the cheapest, way to travel between the coastal resorts and Kingston is to fly. There are regional aerodromes in Negril, Boscobel (Ocho Rios), Port Antonio, and Kingston (Tinson Pen). Montego Bay's Donald Sangster airport also has a domestic terminal. Tim Air (☎ 876-952-2516 or ☎ 876-979-1114, www.timair.com) offers charter flights and Air Jamaica Express (☎ 876-923-6664 www.airjamaica.com) has some scheduled services. Helitours also offers helicopter transfers (☎ ***876-974-1285*** www.jamaicahelicopterservices.com***)***

By Bicycle

In Negril and Treasure Beach it is possible to hire bikes through your accommodation. However, I would only recommend cycling in these resorts for experienced riders as drivers are not cycle-friendly. Cycling in the Blue Mountains offers a far more relaxing and rewarding experience, whether you choose to go on a guided ride or cycle independently (see p 66).

Fast **Facts**

ATMS Nearly all banks in cities, towns, and resorts have ATMs. You'll also find them at many gas stations, making it easy to access your cash in Jamaica. Treasure Beach and the Blue Mountains are notable exceptions; the nearest ATM to Treasure Beach is at Pedro Cross, and be certain to withdraw your cash in Kingston before you set off for the Blue Mountains. Some machines in the major resorts dispense US$ as well as JA$.

BANKING HOURS Banks are normally open Monday to Thursday from 9am to 2pm and on Friday until 3pm or 4pm.

BUSINESS HOURS Offices are usually open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm. Shops generally open Monday to Saturday 8.30am to 5pm. However, in tourist areas you can expect shops to stay open later, and many open on a Sunday.

CELEBRATIONS If you are on honeymoon or celebrating a wedding anniversary during your stay in Jamaica, don't be shy about mentioning this to the receptionist when you check into your accommodation. Many hotels have a policy of providing complimentary sparkling wine, flowers, or chocolates for guests on their red letter days.

CELLPHONES Tri-band phones and those linked to the GSM network can be used in Jamaica. Calls can be costly though. The cheapest and most convenient option is to buy a SIM card from one of Jamaica's network providers. They cost around $10 and can be topped up by buying credit in grocery stores and at gas stations. Digicel is Jamaica's most popular network. It has good reception island-wide and competitive call rates. To ensure the SIM card will work, you'll need to have your phone unlocked, so it can operate with any network before you leave home. This service is often provided by independent phone outlets.

CREDIT CARDS Visa and Mastercard are widely accepted and most major outlets also accept American Express, Diners Club, and Discover. However, in many smaller establishments, despite signs saying all major credit cards are accepted, the electronic equipment that authorizes payment is not always reliable so be prepared to pay by cash.

CUSTOMS US visitors may carry up to US$800 worth of purchases after each 48-hour visit and this can include one liter of liquor duty-free. UK visitors have a duty-free allowance of 200 cigarettes or 50 cigars or 250 grams of tobacco, one liter of spirits, and up to £145.00 worth of other goods and gifts. Canadian visitors are permitted an annual allowance of goods to the value of C$750.00 after a seven-day stay. In addition, 200 cigarettes, 50 cigars, or 2 lbs of tobacco and 40 oz of liquor can be bought duty-free. Australian citizens are allowed A$900 of goods. They are also permitted 200 cigarettes or 50 cigars and a liter of alcohol duty-free. New Zealand citizens may bring back the same duty-free allowance plus gifts and goods up to the value of NZ$700.

DENTISTS Your hotel concierge will be able to recommend a local dental practice.

DOCTORS Larger hotels usually have their own resident nurse who will be able to assist you in the first instance and guide you to the nearest doctor or medical center. See also hospitals below.

DRUGSTORES Throughout the island in both small and major towns, drugstores are generally open normal business hours with some staying open later.

ELECTRICITY Most establishments use US 110/115 volt electrical fittings. 220 volts is still used at some hotels. Adaptors are generally available for guest use.

EMBASSIES **Canada Consulate**, 3 West Kings House Road, Kingston 10 (☎ 876- 926-1500, http://www.jamaica.gc.ca). In Montego Bay: 29 Gloucester Street (☎ 876-952-6198). **British Consulate**, 28 Trafalgar Road, PO Box 575, Kingston 10 (☎ 876-510-0700, http://www.britishhighcommission.gov.uk/jamaica). **US Embassy**, Third Floor,

Mutual Life Building, 142, Old Hope Road, Kingston 6 (☎ 876-702-6000, http://kingston.usembassy.gov). In Montego Bay: St. James Place, 2nd Floor, Gloucester Avenue (☎ 876-952-0160). **Australia** does not have an Embassy or Consulate in Jamaica. The Australian High Commission in Trinidad and Tobago provides consular assistance to Australians in Jamaica at 18 Herbert Street, St Clair, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago (☎ 1-868-628-0695, www.trinidadandtobago.embassy.gov.au).

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE **Ambulance and Fire** ☎ 110. **Police** ☎ 119. In case of vehicle breakdown call the number provided by your hire car company. If you are involved in a road traffic accident call the police in the first instance, and then the phone number provided by your hire car company to inform them.

GAY & LESBIAN TRAVELERS Homosexual acts between consenting male adults are illegal in Jamaica. The law does not cover sexual acts between women. The legal position looks unlikely to change imminently. Jamaica's politicians view international pressure to amend the law as interfering with domestic affairs. They often cite the country's strong Christian values as reason to maintain the status quo. Public opinion on homosexuality varies greatly. Some Jamaicans, both educated and uneducated, have a hostile attitude towards homosexuals while others are tolerant or even accepting. What is generally unacceptable to all are public displays of affection between men or women. Many hotels originally geared exclusively towards straight couples have become more welcoming towards gay couples in recent years. It is still advisable for gay travelers to contact individual properties before making a booking to confirm that they will receive the same warm welcome afforded their straight counterparts. At top-end hotels, sexuality rarely seems to cause a raised eyebrow or second glance.

HOLIDAYS For a list of Jamaica's public holidays, see p. 159.

HOSPITALS **Black River,** Black River Hospital, 45 Main St. Black River, St. Elizabeth ☎ 876-965-2212.

Kingston, University Hospital of the West Indies, Papine Road, Mona ☎ 876-927-1620.

Mandeville, Mandeville Regional Hospital, 32 Hargreaves Avenue ☎ 876-962-2067.

Montego Bay, Cornwell Regional Hospital, Mount Salem ☎ 876-952-5100.

Ocho Rios, St Ann's Bay Hospital, Main Street, St Ann's Bay ☎ 876-972-2272.

Port Antonio, Naylor's Hill, Port Antonio ☎ 876-993-2646 or ☎ 876-715-5778.

Savanna-la-Mar, Barracks Rd, Savanna-la-Mar, Westmoreland ☎ 876-955-9946.

INSURANCE Make sure you have adequate cover for your trip and that your policy is valid for any high-risk activities you intend to undertake, such as diving and motorbike riding. If you are booking your trip far in advance of departure, consider purchasing your trip insurance at the same time. A comprehensive policy should cover you for cancellation due to a personal emergency. In the current economic climate it may also be worth considering a policy that covers you should your tour operator or chosen airline go bankrupt.

INTERNET CAFES/ACCESS The vast majority of hotels have either Wi-Fi Internet access, computer terminals for guest use, or both. Many all-inclusive hotels make an additional charge for this service. Prices tend to be fairly high and can mount up for those who need regular Internet access. A notable exception is the Couples group, which offers free Internet access at all of its properties. Nearly all towns and resorts have at least one Internet cafe. These are geared primarily towards locals and are very cheap to use.

LOST PROPERTY Report lost items to the local police. Your hotel reception desk should be able to give you the phone number and offer advice.

MAIL & POSTAGE Most towns and villages have a post office or postal agency. Opening hours are normally Monday to Friday 8am to 5pm. Those in rural areas may keep shorter hours.

MONEY & EXCHANGE BUREAUX The official currency is the Jamaican Dollar JA$, referred to as 'jays'. A dollar is divided into 100 cents. Notes come in denominations of JA$50, JA$100, JA$500, and JA$1000. Coins are JA$1, JA$5, JA$10 and JA$20. US dollars are widely accepted everywhere, even in local shops. You can exchange money at banks, exchange bureaux, and in most hotels. Jamaica's two international airports have exchange bureaux on site as do the cruise ship piers in Montego Bay and Ocho Rios.

PASSPORTS All foreign nationals must have a valid passport to enter Jamaica. Take a photocopy of your passport's information page and keep it somewhere separate. This will speed up the replacement process at your embassy if it gets lost or stolen. While in Jamaica, keep your passport and other valuables in your room safe or, failing that, in the hotel safe.

PHARMACIES See drugstores above.

POLICE See emergency assistance above.

RESTROOMS There are virtually no public restrooms in Jamaica. Bars, restaurants, and hotels are unlikely to refuse use of their facilities.

SAFETY As throughout the world, common sense rules should be applied at all times. Only use licensed taxis, preferably those booked for you by your hotel. Do not wear excessive jewelry, count your money in public, or overtly display expensive photography and camera equipment. Jamaica is a poor country and unemployment is high. Inexcusable as it is, for some crime seems like the only option. Pickpockets do operate in crowded areas such as concert venues, in markets, and on buses. Gentlemen should refrain from carrying their wallet in their back pocket and ladies should opt for over-the-shoulder handbags that can be closed by zip or clasp. If you are unfortunate enough to be picked as a victim by a robber, hand over your possessions without resistance to avoid violence. Dressing down if traveling off-the-beaten-track is also advisable. Tourist police operate in the major tourist resorts day and night, greatly aiding safety on the Hip Strip in Montego Bay and Main Street in Ocho Rios, where you are unlikely to experience any difficulties. Outside these areas it is not recommended to go out at night on foot alone or even in pairs. Romantic moonlit walks will also put you at risk of robbery unless within your resort's compound. It is not advisable to go into ghetto areas at any time, particularly in Kingston. Indeed, you need to be especially vigilant after dark

throughout Kingston. That said, the vast majority of visitors have a trouble-free time in Jamaica, but as with anywhere in the world, you can end up in the wrong place at the wrong time.

SENIOR CITIZENS Very few attractions offer discounts to senior citizens. The Knutsford Express bus service offers a 10% discount on travel between Kingston, Ocho Rios, and Montego Bay for those over 65 years old. Identification with proof of age is required.

STAYING HEALTHY No vaccinations are required to enter Jamaica, but consult your doctor to get current advice on recommended vaccinations for visitors to the country. These vary depending on whether you intend to vacation in the major resorts or if you are staying or visiting remote and rural areas. Always avoid over-exposure to the sun which is at its strongest between 11am and 3pm. Apply a high-factor sun lotion and be aware that the sea breezes can make the day feel cooler than it actually is while the sun is just as strong. Remember to drink plenty of water or juice during your stay to ensure you do not become dehydrated. It is also advisable to exercise caution when purchasing food from roadside stalls. As a rule of thumb, the busier the stall is, the fresher the food will be. However, if the eatery does not have running water, it is best avoided altogether.

TAX There is a departure tax of JA$1,000 or the US equivalent per person. This is often included in the price of your package tour or airline ticket. Check at the time of booking. General consumption tax is added to many goods and services. The current rate is 17.5%.

TELEPHONE For operator assistance, call ☎ 112 for domestic queries and ☎ 113 for international. For directory enquires call ☎ 114.To call Jamaica from overseas add ☎ 1-876 to your country's international dialing code. From Jamaica, international dialing codes are as follows: Australia ☎ 011- 61, Ireland ☎ 011-353, New Zealand ☎ 011-64, UK ☎ 011-44, USA and Canada ☎ 011-1.

TIME Jamaica is on Eastern Standard Time. It is five hours behind Greenwich Mean Time in autumn/winter and six hours behind Greenwich Mean Time between the last Sunday in March and the last Sunday in October.

TIPPING Porters at the airport and hotel bell boys are customarily tipped $1 per bag. All-inclusive hotels generally have a no-tipping policy. In restaurants and when using taxis a tip of 10–15% is usual. Tour guides and their drivers appreciate tips and these should be at your discretion to reward good service.

TOURIST INFORMATION OFFICES

Kingston, 64 Knutsford Boulevard, ☎ 876-929-9200.

Montego Bay, Cornwall Beach Complex, Gloucester Avenue, ☎ 876-952-4425.

Negril, Times Square Plaza, ☎ 876-957-9314.

Ocho Rios, Ocean Village Shopping Centre, ☎ 876-974-7705.

Port Antonio, City Centre Plaza, ☎ 876-993-3051.

TRAVELERS WITH DISABILITIES Before traveling to Jamaica, contact the local Government Tourist Office (see above) for up-to-date details on which attractions provide disabled

access. Many larger hotels have improved access for wheelchair users in recent years and are continuing to do so. Contact the individual properties ahead of booking to discuss your needs. Some restaurants and attractions are also now wheelchair accessible. Your hotel concierge will be able to advise you on restaurants with wheelchair access within your resort.

WATER Tap water in Jamaica is purified and generally safe to drink. Bottled purified water and bottled spring water are also widely available, if you prefer to err on the side of caution.

Jamaica: A Brief History

A.D. 650 The first-known human settlers, the Taino Indians (originally from Venezuela), arrive in Jamaica.

1494 Christopher Columbus, on his second journey to the New World, attempts to land at St Ann's Bay. However, the Tainos thwart him. The following day he lands at Discovery Bay and names the island San Jago (or Santiago), after St James.

1503–4 Columbus returns to the island where his ship runs aground. He is stranded on the island for a year repairing his ships.

1510 The Spanish establish the colony of Sevilla Nueva just west of St Ann's Bay and enslave the Tainos.

1517 The first enslaved Africans are brought to the island.

1534 The Spanish abandon Sevilla Nueva, and make a new capital on the site that we know today as Spanish Town.

1655 The English sail into Kingston harbor and capture the island. By this point, it is of little importance to the Spanish (who had been using the harbor mainly as a base from which to conquer the Americas). As a result, little is done to defend it. The Spanish, who are allowed by the English to flee to Cuba, release their slaves who flee to the hills and form the Maroons. This year also sees the start of the slave economy (which lasts until 1838). The British import Africans to be used as slaves on the sugar plantations, bringing huge wealth to both the plantation owners and to the English cities such as Liverpool and Bristol, which service the trade with Jamaica and the rest of the West Indies.

1658 The Spanish fail in their attempt to reclaim the island, and the English under Oliver Cromwell, begin their colonization.

1660 The island's Governor, Thomas Modyford, gives the pirates based at Port Royal royal immunity to harass Spanish ships and colonies in the Caribbean, thereby weakening the Spanish forces and their ability to reclaim Jamaica. The privateers grow rich on the proceeds and Port Royal comes to be known as 'the wickedest city in Christendom'.

1670 The Spanish cede Jamaica to the British.

1692 An earthquake destroys Port Royal.

1693 The city of Kingston is laid out.

1694 England and France are at war when a French fleet attacks Jamaica. Plantations are plundered; 50 sugar estates are destroyed; slaves are captured and taken away. However, the French are ultimately defeated at Carlisle Bay.

1739 The Maroons sign a treaty with the British in which they agree to capture and return runaway slaves and help suppress rebellions. In return, they are given land and the right to self-government.

1760 An insurrection of slaves takes place in St Mary. They seize the town of Port Maria, where they arm themselves. Troops are sent to deal with the insurrection and the slaves are defeated, with 400 killed and 600 more deported to British Honduras.

1795 Unrest breaks out between the Government and the Maroons of Trelawny, who want more land for their growing population. 5,000 troops are sent to capture them. After several months, the Maroons surrender and are shipped to Nova Scotia and from there to Sierra Leone.

1803 Kingston is made a 'corporate city'—with a mayor, aldermen, and councilors.

1831 The last great slave rebellion led by Samuel Sharpe, a Baptist deacon, takes place. The Christmas Rebellion, as it is known, lasts four months. Finally, the rebel leaders are captured and hanged in Montego Bay.

1834 The Slavery Abolition Act is passed. However, slaves are required to work for their masters for a further six years as indentured laborers to earn their freedom. The British parliament pays compensation to the Jamaican slave-holders of £5,853,975.

1838 The indentured labor scheme is abandoned and slaves are granted unconditional freedom on 1st August.

1848 Britain introduces a free trade policy allowing importation of sugar from non-British colonies. Jamaican sugar producers struggle to compete with countries such as Cuba, where slave labor is still being used.

1865 The Morant Bay Rebellion is led by a black deacon, Paul Bogle, in protest at the continued oppression and abject poverty experienced by the former slaves, who were refused land rights. Nearly 600 people are shot or hanged. Bogle, too, is captured and hanged.

1872 The capital is moved from Spanish Town to Kingston.

1938 Riots, protests, and disturbances break out across the country as discontent over low wages and high unemployment increases. Alexander Bustamante organizes the country's first recognized labor union.

1943 The Jamaican Labour Party (JLP) is formed under Alexander Bustamante.

1944 Jamaica becomes fully self-governing.

1953 Queen Elizabeth II visits Jamaica, marking the first time a reigning British monarch has visited the island.

1957 Jamaica receives full internal self-government and adopts a parliamentary system modeled on that of the UK.

1962 Jamaica is granted independence on 6th August. Sir Alexander Bustamante, leader of the JLP, is the first Prime Minister. Jamaica becomes a member of the Commonwealth.

1972 The People's National Party (PNP) defeats the JLP to win the general election. Michael Manley becomes Prime Minister. There is political unrest during subsequent election campaigns due to economic instability.

1980 Edward Sega leads the JLP back into power.

1989 The PNP wins the election and Michael Manley is returned as Prime Minister.

1993 The PNP wins the election led by Percival J. Patterson.

2006 Portia Simpson Miller takes over from PJ Patterson as leader of the PNP and becomes Jamaica's first female Prime Minister.

2007 The Jamaican Labour Party returns to power after 18 years of PNP rule and Bruce Golding becomes Prime Minister.

2008 Jamaica wins 11 medals at the Beijing Olympics and sprinter Usain Bolt breaks three world records, proving to be the fastest man on Earth.

The Plantocracy Era

When the British captured Jamaica from the Spanish in 1655, they immediately saw the island's potential as a plantation colony. Sugar cane was the cash crop of the day, and vast swathes of land were cleared and thousands of acres of cane fields planted. Slaves from Africa were imported to work in the fields. Some of the land was given by the Crown to those who had helped overthrow the Spanish and other plots were sold to entrepreneurs in Britain. Most plantation owners administered their estates from Britain, reaping the profits while they employed overseers to handle the day-to-day management. Jamaica grew to become one of the world's leading producers of sugar in the 1700s. For more than 300 years, until the early 19th century, African slaves were used to harvest the lucrative sugar crops. But their terrible living and working conditions meant that up to a third died within three years of arriving on the island. In all, one and a half million Africans were forcibly brought to Jamaica. In 1807, the Slave Trade between Africa and Jamaica was abolished by the British Parliament. At that time, there were still 319,351 slaves on the island. However, they remained bound to their former owners until 1st August 1838, when they were finally decreed unconditionally free. This day is now referred to as Emancipation Day and celebrated in Jamaica as a public holiday.

Jamaican **Food**

Menu Items & Dishes

Ackee and salt fish The national dish of Jamaica consists of salted cod and ackee, a soft, fleshy yellow fruit which is used like a vegetable and has a texture that resembles scrambled egg in appearance and texture but not in taste.

Bammy A flatbread made from the flour of cassava (a root vegetable), usually served fried and sometimes steamed.
Breadfruit A dense potato-like vegetable, delicious roasted or boiled and sometimes made into deep-fried chunky fries.
Bun and cheese A sandwich made from sweet bread studded with raisins and mature cheddar-like hard cheese.
Callaloo A spinach-like leaf vegetable with a strong flavor.
Cho cho Light green, delicately textured, watery vegetable that is a member of the squash family.
Curry goat A hot, rich mutton curry, with the meat cut into pieces but left on the bone to enhance the flavor.
Dumplings Starchy dough balls, either served boiled or fried.
Escovitched fish Fried fish, finished in a sauce of cooked-down onions, vinegar, and scotch-bonnet peppers.
Festival Deep-fried savory sausage-shaped donut made from cornmeal.
Green banana Used like a vegetable, their flesh is slightly savory and firmer than that of a regular banana, and they are served boiled.
Jerk Chicken, pork, or fish coated with a marinade of hot peppers and spices, then cooked and smoked over a sweet pimento wood barbecue pit.
Mackerel Rundown Mackerel cooked in coconut milk.
Oxtail Stewed and cooked slowly in a rich, oily sauce with thyme, garlic, butter beans, and onions.
Patty A half-moon pastry parcel filled with spicy, seasoned meat, fish, or vegetables.
Pepperpot stew A thick soup made from callaloo, okra, and pork or beef.
Plantain A soft-textured fruit that looks like a larger version of the banana and is used like a vegetable. It has a slightly sweet taste and is mainly served fried.
Rice and Peas Carbohydrate staple that accompanies many meals. It consists of rice cooked down with creamed coconut and red kidney beans.
Stamp and Go Rounded, deep-fried fish fritters made from salted cod.
Yam A slightly sweet root vegetable.

Popular Drinks

Appleton Rum The island's own fire-water distilled from sugar cane is enjoyed neat or over ice and is the base for many cocktails. The white rum has the highest alcohol content, and the dark, or gold variety as it is referred to in Jamaica, is smoother and sweeter.
Blue Mountain Coffee Grown in the Blue Mountains this exceptionally smooth coffee, with virtually no bitter after-taste, is considered to be one of the finest coffees in the world.
Carrot Juice Not the healthy thirst-quencher you might expect, Jamaicans add condensed milk and white rum to the carrot juice.
Coconut Water Usually served in the husk and drunk through a straw. Hotels, restaurants, and roadside stalls alike serve up this sweet and light beverage.
High Mountain Coffee The coffee grown on the slopes of Jamaica's lower mountain ranges is the one most frequently served on the island. Like Blue Mountain Coffee, it is also smooth-tasting and low in caffeine. Jamaicans take theirs with condensed milk.

Pina Colada One of the most common and popular cocktails served island-wide, it combines pineapple juice, coconut water, and gold rum—all ingredients produced in Jamaica.

Red Stripe Jamaica's own brand of beer has a crisp, clean, and light taste.

Rum Punch A classic cocktail that dates back to the colonial era. Rum is mixed with fruit juice (typically orange and pineapple), Grenadine liqueur, and a squeeze of lime to create a refreshing, but heady, drink.

Jamaican **Patois**

Jamaica's official language is English, however you are just as likely to hear Jamaican patois spoken in everyday conversations between islanders. An English-African Creole dialect, it takes a while to tune your ear into its animated phrasing and soft, warm lilt, but then it is quite easy to understand, even if still tricky to speak. It is pronounced as it is written.

Useful Vocabulary & Phrases

PATOIS	ENGLISH
Bad	good, great
Bashment	party, dance
Beg yuh a smalls?	do you have any spare change?
Big tings a go'wann!	Something great has or is happening
Blouse and skirt!	an exclamation of surprise
Bobo	fool
Bredren	word used to describe male friends
Bring di food quick o'clock	hurry up with the food
Bwoy	boy as in a male, or as in the exclamation, oh, boy
Cease and sekkle	stop and chill out for a while
Chuhan	exclamation used at the end of a sentence in both a positive and negative way
Criss	cool or nice
Dehso	there or over there
Diss	disrespect
Dis ya food criss	the food is great
Duppy	a ghost
Everyting cook and curry	everything is good, everything is taken care of
Fi true	that's right, that's exactly how it is
Goweh!	go away
Gyal	girl
Herb	marijuana
Irie	everything is cool or OK
Layta	see you later
Lick	to hit

PATOIS	ENGLISH
Likkle more	see you in a while
Mi a ded fi hungah	I'm dying of hunger
Mi a run tings	I'm the boss
Mi Fren	my friend
Mi mash up	I'm exhausted, I've had a big night out
Mi nuh no	I don't know
Mi yard	my home
Nuh mine 'im	pay him no mind, ignore him
Nyam	to eat
Ooman	woman
Pickney	children
Respect	a greeting that shows approval
Seen	I agree
Selector	DJ
Sistren	word used to describe female friends
Soon come	I am on my way, it will soon come to pass
Ta raas	Really? No way?
Vex	to be angry
Wa' appen	What's happening? Tell me what's new!
Wah yuh want?	What do you want?
Whine and grind	style of dancing closely with your partner and gyrating your groins together
Whole heap	a lot

Suggested Reading

Catch a Fire: The Life of Bob Marley, Timothy White (Macmillan)
Dr No, Ian Fleming (Penguin)
Flowers of the Caribbean, GW Lennox and SA Seddon (Macmillan Caribbean)
Guide to the Blue and John Crow Mountains, The Natural History Society of Jamaica, edited by Margaret Hodges (Ian Randle Publishers)
Nyam Jamaica: A Culinary Tour, Rosemary Parkinson (published by Rosemary Parkinson)
A Photographic Guide to the Birds of Jamaica, Audrey Downer, Ann Haynes Sutton, Robert Sutton, and YJ Rey-Millet (Helm Photographic Guide Series)
The Rise and Fall of Falmouth, Jamaica. Carey Robinson (LMH Publishing Limited)
Selected Poems by Linton Kwesi Johnson (Penguin)
Small Island, Andrea Levy (Headline Review)
Trees of the Caribbean, SA Seddon and GW Lennox (Macmillan Caribbean)
What the Preacher Forgot to Tell Me—Identity and Gospel in Jamaica, Faith Elaine Linton, Las G Newman, and Marina H Hofman (Bay-Ridge Books)
Wide Sargasso Sea, Jean Ryhs (Penguin)

Noel Coward

British playwright Noel Coward fell in love with Jamaica after a two-week holiday in 1944. Returning four years later to rent Goldeneye—the estate of fellow author Ian Fleming (see p. 101)—he spotted a piece of land along the coast to the east and built his own home, Blue Harbour. It became a draw for stars including Sir Laurence Olivier, Errol Flynn, Marlene Dietrich, and Katherine Hepburn, proving so popular that Coward needed a retreat. It was then that he built Firefly, on a hillside 305m (100 ft) above Blue Harbour, where he escaped to write and paint. Coward died in Jamaica in 1973 and was buried at his beloved Firefly. His grave overlooks Blue Harbour.

Films Shot or Part-Shot in Jamaica

Belly (1988)
Cocktail (1988)
Countryman (1982)
Dancehall Queen (1997)
Dr No (1962)
The Harder They Come (1972, see p. 151)
How Stella Got Her Groove Back (1998)
Live and Let Die (1973)
No Place Like Home (2006)
One Love (2003)
Papillon (1973)
Rockers (1978)
Runt (2005)
Shottas (2002)
Third World Cop (1999)
20,000 Leagues Under The Sea (1954)
Wide Sargasso Sea (1993)

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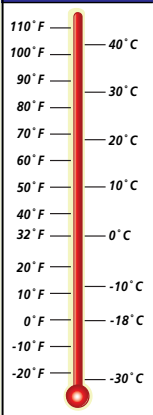
CLOTHING SIZES

WOMEN			MEN			CHILDREN	
UK	US	Europe	UK Metric (cm)	US	Europe	UK Metric (Ht cm)	US
8	6	36	91	36	46	109	4
10	8	38	97	38	48	122	6
12	10	40	102	40	50	140	8
14	12	42	107	42	52	147	10
16	14	44	112	44	54	152	12
18	16	46				157	14
20	18	48					

METRIC CONVERSIONS

TEMPERATURE



To convert F to C:
subtract 32 and multiply by 5/9 (.555)
To convert C to F:
multiply by 1.8 and add 32

32˚F = 0˚C

DISTANCE

To convert	*multiply by*
inches to centimeters	2.54
centimeters to inches	.39
feet to meters	.30
meters to feet	3.28
yards to meters	.91
meters to yards	1.09
miles to kilometers	1.61
kilometers to miles	.62

1 ft = .30 m ***1 mile = 1.6 km***
1 m = 3.3 ft ***1 km = .62 mile***

WEIGHT

To convert	*multiply by*
Ounces to grams	28.35
Grams to ounces	.035
Pounds to kilograms	.45
Kilograms to pounds	2.20

1 ounce = 28 grams
1 pound = .4555 kilogram

1 gram = .04 ounce
1 kilogram = 2.2 pounds

LIQUID VOLUME

To convert	*multiply by*
Gallons to liters	4.55
Liters to gallons	.22
Pints to liters	.56
Liters to pints	1.76

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A Frommer's™ Book
A Branded Imprint of
WILEY

ISBN 978-0-470-71709-7
51499
9 780470 717097

UK £8.99 US $14.99 CAN $16.99